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THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

1. CAN "EDUCATION" BE DEFINED?

T. S. Eliot

A WELL-KNOWN DIVINE, in a recent volume[1] devoted to the sort of problems with which I shall be here concerned, has pronounced a judgment which I have tried to take to heart. "It is," he says, "unfortunately true that most educators do not sufficiently ignore literary dabblers but are, rather, unduly impressed by them." He had preceded this harsh warning, to be sure, by a sentence which is less disturbing; he had just remarked: "If the physical scientists, the religionists, the naturalists, the artists, and the students of human contacts could unite to bestow upon them [i.e., the literary dabblers] the privilege of talking exclusively to one another, and could turn jointly to the reconsideration of what constitutes true education to the restoration of sound thinking based upon adequate experience, there would be less confusion of mind in educational circles and more of that mutually helpful cooperation which properly exists between those who, by various methods and by complementary avenues, are seeking the one Truth." I am not sure whether, in the present context, I am to be regarded as an artist or as a literary dabbler. Between helpful contribution and ignorant interference there may be a very narrow line indeed; and I must accept the risk if I am to say anything at all.

Education is a subject on which we all feel that we have something to say. We have all been educated, more or less; and we have, most of us, complaints to make about the defects of our own education; and we all like to blame our educators, or the system within which they were compelled to work, for our failure to educate ourselves. And the literary dabbler has sometimes dabbled in teaching as well. I have been a master at a grammar school for one term, and for a year at a school for little boys; for three years of my life I conducted an Adult

[1] Bernard Iddings Bell, *Crisis in Education* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1949).

Education class once a week; at one time I was an Assistant in Philosophy taking weekly tutorial groups, and at a much later age I was responsible for a course for undergraduates in the subject—God forgive me—of Contemporary English Literature. I do not include the various series of public lectures which I have given at universities, because no one has to pass an examination on such lectures, and therefore they are no part of education. And I mention my nominal qualifications only to affirm that in my opinion they are, for my present task, no qualifications at all.

A couple of years ago I produced a book called *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*—a title which some readers declared to be pretentious and pedantic, and others declared to be evidence of mock-modesty. In this book I included, perhaps somewhat irrelevantly, a chapter treating a selection of what I believed to be current fallacies of educational theory. The chapter could not pretend to any unity or structure other than that of enumeration; and perhaps its chief function was to appease the feeling of irritation with a good deal of nonsense that had been talked and written in England during the war years. Having relieved the emotions with which my mind—or my liver—was charged, I felt much better; and thought that I should never be impelled to return to this subject. But, unfortunately, this chapter caught the eye of a very distinguished educator,[2] who, after a few polite commendations, exposed me publicly as the author of a mass of contradictions; and, in effect, called upon me to produce something more coherent or make my apology. Well, this is an attempt to do a little of both.

I immediately recognized one fault: that while, in the earlier and I hope better composed part of the book, I had attempted to distinguish between at least three different though closely related meanings which the word *culture* has in different contexts, I had used the word *education* without bothering to analyze it in the same way. Yet it is immediately obvious that the word *education* means something different, to begin with, when we are talking of what is *offered* and when we are talking of what is *received;* when we are talking of education as something done to people and when we mean what they do for themselves. We may mean the machine, or we may mean the contact of an apt pupil with the right teacher.

Here I must make an excursion. I have already exposed my willingness to risk the reputation of a literary dabbler in Education; I

[2] Robert M. Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot on Education," *Measure,* I (Winter 1950), 1–8.

must risk that of a literary dabbler in semantics and semasiology. This is a still more forbidden preserve than Education; but the world is now so full of highly specialized subjects, the landscape is so completely divided into prohibited areas, with notice boards warning us that we must keep out, or that trespassers will be prosecuted, or simply to Beware of the Bull, that the literary dabbler is goaded to recklessness. So I shall mark off what I have to say on this subject—and abandon it later if it exposes me to too much derision—by entitling it "Notes towards the Definition of Runcibility," or "MacTaggart Refuted."

The late John MacTaggart Ellis MacTaggart was a philosopher at Trinity College, Cambridge, who enjoyed a considerable reputation in his day. I have never read any of his works, but I believe that he was an Hegelian; an exponent of a philosophy now out of favor, except in the form of Dialectical Materialism. But it is said to have been Mr. MacTaggart who offered the explanation that the word *runcible* means *tortoise-shell.* He based this interpretation upon two loci, one in *The Owl and the Pussycat,* and the other in *The Pobble Who Has No Toes.* You will remember that the Owl and the Pussycat ate their wedding feast with a runcible spoon; and that the Pobble's Aunt Jobiska had a runcible cat with crimson whiskers. Recognizing that tortoise-shell spoons are sometimes made, and that tortoise-shell cats sometimes occur, MacTaggart affirmed that *tortoise-shell* was the only adjective applicable to both cats and spoons. Now, the question whether there is or is not any other adjective in the language applicable to both cats and spoons is one I do not raise: I am ready to accept MacTaggart's findings on this point. Nor do I rest my objection on his inadequate knowledge of the works of Edward Lear; I mean, on the fact that in another poem Lear describes himself as going forth "in a runcible hat." It would be easy for any disciple of MacTaggart to get round that with a footnote suggesting that Lear was an eccentric —which can hardly be denied—and that anyone like Lear might well have worn the shell of a tortoise as a hat; pointing out, incidentally, the similarity of shape between the shell of a tortoise and the academic headdress of doctors of letters at some English universities. No, I maintain that MacTaggart's method was wrong from the start.

It is a commonplace that the same word may develop two meanings which have no relation to each other except that of derivation from one root. Compare the verb *évincer* in French, meaning "to eject, to dispossess," with the word *evince* in English, meaning nowadays "to display, exhibit, manifest." They both meant originally

"conquer"—they both started, that is, faithful to the meaning of the Latin from which they were formed. The modern use of the French verb is primarily legal. But the English verb has an interesting history. In the early sixteenth century, when it still meant "overcome, prevail over," it meant also ' convince"—overcoming in argument (of course, "convince" retains the significance of victory), and to "confute." A little later, it appears as "constrain, extort"; at the same time it could mean "establish" or "vindicate." Towards the end of the eighteenth century it appears to make a sudden leap into meaning "to make evident or manifest." This leap is not so puzzling as it might seem, when we look at the quotation illustrating this meaning in the O.E.D., taken from the *Voyages of Captain Cook* (1790): "Their pacific disposition is thoroughly evinced, from their friendly reception of all strangers." Here the meaning of 1790, "to make evident or manifest," is not very remote from one meaning of 1610: "to prove by argument or evidence." And "to make evident or manifest" gives an easy transition to the use from the early nineteenth century to the present day, that of "display, exhibit, manifest." Thus, the transition of a word from one meaning to another may be easy, natural, and certainly in the history of *evince,* reasonable; each transition may be so imperceptible that the authors—and, we must not forget, the unremembered speakers—responsible for it may be unaware that they are committing any novelty: and yet it is a long way from the Latin verb *evincere,* to conquer, and the English verbs *exhibit* or *manifest,* which come from different roots. And there is a wide gulf between the meaning today of the English *evince* and the French *évincer.*

There is an obvious utility in acquainting ourselves with the history of important words, because without this understanding we are always reading modern meanings into the older texts of English literature. It is as necessary as it is to know, for example, that *suspenders* in England hold up socks, and that in America they support *pants,* which are held up in England by *braces,* and are not called *pants,* because that term is reserved for the garment underneath the American pants. But besides the variations of meaning of the same word in the same place at different times, and at the same time in different places, there is the still more important variation of meaning of the same word at the same time in the same place. Before proceeding farther, I want to suggest that this wobbliness of words is not something to be deplored. We should not try to pin a word down to one meaning, which it should have at all times, in all places, and for everybody. Of course there must be many words in a language

which are relatively at least fixed always to one meaning. To say nothing of scientific terms, there are many substantives which name concrete objects and must have meant essentially the same thing throughout the history of the language: such as those two words which used to be employed by philosophers when they were considering whether anything existed or not—namely, *table* and *chair*. But there are also many words which *must* change their meaning, because it is their changes in meaning that keep a language *alive*, or rather, that indicate that the language *is* alive. If they did not change, it would mean either that we were living exactly the same life as our ancestors (the rate of change in the meanings of words in the language of a primitive tribe I should expect, other things being equal, to be very slow) or else that our language was no longer adequate to our needs—in which case, the more progressive language of some neighbor might supplant it.

Related to the change of meaning of words from one generation to another, are the variations of meaning which they may come to have at the same time, and it is these variations with which I am here concerned. When two words from the same root have acquired such diverse meanings in two different languages as *évincer* and *evince*, they are virtually two different words. The confusion would be intolerable if *evince* in English meant *both* "to dispossess" and "to manifest." But there are many words which we must use in slightly different senses in different contexts; and the difference in meaning, though slight, may be very important. A great many of our confusions in thought arise from our not observing that we are using the same word in several senses.

Now to come back for a moment to the word *runcible*. It is a nonsense word, but I think we can learn something about "sense words" from examining nonsense words. Lewis Carroll's "portmanteau" words, like *slithy, gimble,* and *wabe,* are not pure nonsense words, for he defined their meaning; neither is Edward Lear's *spongetaneous*. But *runcible,* so far as I can discover, is a pure nonsense word: being such, it has no root. It cannot be defined. But I should deny that there was no relationship between his three uses of the same word. The rightness of the word, in each of these uses, the fact that it satisfies us as applicable to objects so different as a cat, a spoon, and a hat, is something that our sensibility acknowledges; we also feel that in each use there is a different shade of meaning. It is the nonsense shadow of the kind of word with which I am concerned, and so it cannot mean *tortoise-shell*. And incidentally, Lear was a poet; so, if he had meant *tortoise-shell,* he would probably have said *tortoise-shell*.

The word I am after, of course, is *education.* In the book in which I indiscreetly committed myself to a chapter of notes on education, I made, as I have just said, some effort to distinguish three senses in which we use the word *culture:* meaning something a little different when we are speaking of the individual, the group, or the society as a whole. I maintained that it would not do to have three different words, or even to say always "culture A, B, or C," because these meanings interpenetrate each other and give significance to each other; but that we must be constantly on guard not to make statements about one category which are applicable only to another. It is possible that I have done so myself, even in chapters in which I was trying to distinguish. We can hardly avoid occasionally misleading our readers, for it is more than we can do always to avoid misleading ourselves. And we must remember that the meaning of a word is never wholly represented by its definition, that is, by other words; and that there is an implicit unity between all the meanings of a word like "culture" which cannot be wholly confined within a definition: this is the unity which we feel in going through the several definitions of the word in current use.

What I did not do, however, was to analyze the several meanings of "education." I do not think that any of the authors whose statements I was calling into question had done so either; but that is no excuse. Like the authors whom I criticized, I let it be assumed that "education" had one meaning only.

Some light on the complexity of the meaning of the word can be found by examining, as we did with *evince,* the history of the word. I return to the O.E.D. The word *education* follows a pretty straight course, except for including the training of animals, and for one technical application to the training of silkworms. It is first applied to the teaching of the very young: in fact, the first illustration given, dating from 1540, speaks of the education of infants one year old. It then proceeds to the training of young persons with reference to the station they are to occupy in life: that is, to the fixed group. (Early treatises on education, of course, were concerned with preparing young gentlemen for life at court.) It proceeds next to "the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life"; also "the whole course of scholastic instruction which a person has received": that is to say, the word develops along with schools and colleges; but it still has frequently a professional connotation—legal, for example, or medical. Finally, it becomes "culture, or development of powers, formation of character, as con-

trasted with the imparting of mere knowledge or skill." And it is at this stage that we begin to get into difficulties over the meaning of the word in different contexts.

As time goes on, and a language ages, it becomes more difficult to find out what words mean, and whether they are meaning the same thing to different people. And when we use the *word* "education," we are probably using it either so comprehensively that in consequence of meaning everything, it denotes nothing, or else we have at the back of our minds one particular meaning. We may, for instance, be thinking of the "educated man." But the highest type of educated man is not simply a man who has been through the best educational institutions; he is, to begin with, more educable than most, and is one who has done much to educate himself since he ceased to be a pupil. We may mean by the educated man, one who is very highly trained and highly proficient in some very narrow specialty; or we may mean a man who has had a good "all-round education"—which we then may proceed to sketch out, though we seldom agree as to what education is all-round, admitting that no one person has the time, even if he has the capacities, to be educated "all-round." When we think of the individual, we are apt, I believe, and rightly, to be stressing what the man does for himself, rather than what is done to him. And the perfectly educated man, like the perfectly cultured man, does not exist; and the kind of perfection in question differs according to the environment. It is easier to think in terms of the group. In earlier times, of which there remain vestiges, it was the *social* group; in our time it is more importantly the technical group. So long as you are concerned merely with a small group of the same social rank, the question of the purpose or meaning of education hardly arises. For the fact that all of the pupils have much the same background, have nominally the same religious allegiance, and will proceed to later activities within the same group, means that a great deal of "education" in the widest sense can be taken for granted or ignored. And where a technical education is concerned, its aim is clear, its success or failure can be measured; the only question is at what age to begin. The students will, no doubt, come from very different backgrounds, and will eventually scatter, to lead, apart from their professional activities, very different lives; but the question of what they should be taught, and in what order, is a manageable one. The real difficulty arises when the word *education* is taken in its most recent meaning, "culture, or development of powers, formation of character." For the meaning in relation to a social or professional

group is distinguished by all the things that it is not; whereas in the widest sense, education covers the whole of life for the whole of society.

I am not objecting to this developed meaning of the word. I think it was inevitable with the development of society in magnitude, in complexity, and in organization, and with the pressure so evident in our own time, towards the conscious direction and centralization of more and more of life. But we have been forced into meaning all this by education, in an age when, being more conscious of our culture, we are more doubtful of it; and in an age when there are divergent views as to how character should be formed. And there is the increasing danger, that in applying this definition to the purposes of our educational institutions, we expect them to do for society what society ought to do for itself. And "culture, development of powers, formation of character," provide an especially hard task to be set before our educational institutions of the present day. These institutions are, in all countries, so vast; they bring together students of such different types; they have so many departments; they are at the same time so highly organized and so formless. We can easily aim at more, and accomplish less, than our grandparents and great-grandparents did.

I should like to return to the list of the three ends of education suggested by Dr. C. E. M. Joad, which I criticized briefly in my book; because they seem to me as good as any three that I have seen given. They are:

> To enable a boy or girl to make his or her living.
>
> To equip him to play his part as a citizen of a democracy.
>
> To enable him to develop all the latent powers and faculties of his nature and so enjoy a good life.

These make up, in fact, the professional, the social, and the individual aspects of education, in the terms in which Dr. Joad sees them. The first, the training for a livelihood, is certainly a permanent part of education. But it is, of course, to be interpreted in connection with the second and third. The livelihood has to fit in with the needs and requirements of society; it has also to be the sort of living for which the individual is best fitted by tastes and capacities. What is implied is a good society: for it is well-known that in most societies some highly important activities are underpaid or even discouraged. A good society, as well as a decent individual, is also implied by the third end, that of "developing the latent powers." For some of the latent powers might be evil, and the development of the individual's powers is not solely for his enjoyment of life: some of them should be beneficial, and the rest harmless to society.

So we get to the question, what sort of society should it be? I am not happy to say simply "in a democracy" as do Dr. Joad and others. In the first place, this is a statement to which every politician nowadays in every country would subscribe; and when everybody agrees on using the same word to describe totally different institutions, it becomes suspect. In the second place, as the word always suggests to everybody the particular kind of democracy in which he lives, the next step is to say "my democracy is more democratic than your democracy"; whereas it seems to me that each democratic country has to fashion a democracy which will differ in some respects from those of others, but may be equally "democratic." Next, a democracy worthy of the name seems to me a democracy of human beings, not simply of formal systems; much depends upon the citizens and those whom they choose to represent them. There may be a lack of accord between the formal institutions and the ethos of the particular people that operates them; and for this reason, and because of corruption amongst those who make politics a profession, or indifference or ignorance or prejudice or ill-regulated emotion amongst the public, a democracy can sometimes work very badly.

We all agree on the affirmation that a democracy is the best possible aim for society; and the widest definition of democracy that *I* can find, is a society in which the maximum of responsibility is combined with the maximum of individual liberty. But we cannot leave it at that. For one thing, the concept of "responsibility" seems to imply that of "freedom"; and vice versa. One becomes responsible not simply by having tasks imposed which one cannot escape; for an individual to be truly responsible he must be free to shirk his responsibilities; and no one can be said to be truly "a free man" who is "irresponsible"—that is, at the mercy of his whims or appetites—a man who takes no responsibility for himself.

I should make it quite clear that I accept Dr. Joad's assertion that one of the aims of education should be to equip its products to play their parts as citizens of a democracy. When I say I accept it, I mean that any other assertion which contradicted it *within the same area of discourse* would be false. Such an assertion would be, for instance, that "one of the aims of education should be to equip its products to play their parts as citizens of an anti-democracy," or "it is not the business of education to form good citizens." What I want to recognize is simply, that a definition of one term is likely to involve the use of undefined defining terms. Now, this seems to be inevitable; it is a permanent condition of language and of thought. A definition is sufficient, when, for the purpose of using the defined term correctly,

we do not need a further definition of the defining terms. It is inadequate and dangerous, when we extend the meaning of the defining terms to what was not in the intention of the definer—because there is always this limitation to a definition, that it is made by somebody, and is apprehended by somebody. There are areas of exact thought in which it does not matter who the definer was; but here we are not in one of those happy scientific paradises.

Now, in the assertion under examination, I think that it is necessary to assume that we mean the essence of democracy—that we are not selecting one meaning rather than another. It must mean all that I have suggested a few minutes ago: not merely a form of government, but a common ethos, a common way of responding emotionally, even common standards of conduct in private life. But the reader of such a definition is apt to respond to the word "democracy" merely with a few shreds of impressions of conventions, elections, going to vote, and the like. If he proceeds to something more articulate, he may proceed to define democracy, either in a way that suggests to some readers that he doesn't mean democracy at all, or else in a way that leaves them unsatisfied. Dr. Edward Leen, an Irish theologian, in an interesting and commendable book *What Is Education?* says: "It is agreed that a certain acceptable meaning can be given to the statement that youth must be educated for democracy, provided we are clear as to what democracy means." He then goes on to tell us what he means. "Democracy rightly understood," he says, "is nothing less than aristocracy." He should, I think, have said "aristocracy rightly understood," because he goes on to give his own meaning to "aristocracy." He means "an aristocracy of worth, not an aristocracy of accident." The admission to it, he says, is not by money or by birth, but by personal, moral, and intellectual effort.

Now for one thing, this is not the common meaning of "aristocracy," and I am rather suspicious of attempts to change the common meaning by violence. But, for another, Dr. Leen has, it seems to me, merely pushed the problem a stage farther away without helping us to get there; for the problem of how to get the best men as rulers is one which remains to be solved. And furthermore, it does not seem to me ideally democratic, for it at least may suggest that society is sharply divisible into rulers and ruled; he has, it seems to me, limited his view of democracy to the political aspect.

It is beginning to appear that a formal definition of education, and a generalized statement of its purpose, is not to be easily come by. The statement "to equip boys and girls to play their part in a democracy" is evidently only a secondary purpose, unless we choose

to restrict very narrowly the meaning of "education." For it is obvious that if this is an essential part of education, many of the greatest sages and scholars of the past cannot be called educated; and we must say this even of the fathers of democracy. As a secondary purpose, it must be accepted only with full awareness of its limitations and dangers. The chief danger is that, in a democratic society, education may come to be interpreted as *educational adaptation to environment.* Surely, no one is educated to play his part in a democracy, if he has merely been adapted to the particular routine of democracy in which he finds himself; he must be educated to criticize his own democracy, to measure it against what democracy should be, and to recognize the differences between what is proper and workable in one democracy and what is proper and workable in another. He must be adapted to it, certainly: for without being adapted to it, he cannot play a part in it, he can hardly survive in it. But he must not be completely adapted to it in the form in which he finds it around him; for that would be to train a generation to be completely incapable of any change or improvement, unable to make discoveries or experiments, or to adapt itself to those changes which go on perpetually without anyone's having deliberately intended to bring them about. So "education for democracy" is not so simple a matter as it sounds when we first hear it.

We have seen that "training to earn a livelihood," which is one of the purposes of education, means training in a particular society: a livelihood is made in quite different ways in different societies, and even in the best societies some of the ways of making a livelihood are far from praiseworthy. And the third purpose of education, "to enable us to develop all the latent powers and faculties of our nature and so enjoy a good life," also has its full meaning only within the bounds of a particular society. If we mean by "a good life" the kind of life which that society considers good, we are committed to a program of complete adaptation; if we mean by it, a good life independent of the social limitations of place and time, we must have some other standard of goodness. And the development of *all* our latent powers (even if we confine ourselves to powers for *good*) is limited by the livelihood we have to earn, and the society in which we earn it. So it would seem that education must be partly a process of adaptation to our society as it is; partly a preparation for the sort of society we want it to become; and at the same time we are aware that education, and our responsibility towards those we educate, are not comprehended by our conception of our society as it is, however modified by what we aspire that it should be. What education would we design,

for instance, for an individual destined to become a permanent Robinson Crusoe? It would have to be pretty comprehensive, certainly, in practical skills: there is very little in the way of applied science that would come amiss; but his education would have to include, surely, some mental discipline, in the way of furnishing him with the mental and spiritual resources with which that hero was so well equipped, for enduring solitude. What education, on the other hand, would we design for pupils who we knew would have to live in a thoroughly *bad* society? Bad, not merely corrupt as all societies are, but organized towards evil? Our educators, fortunately, do not have to devise curricula for these situations; but unless our definition of education can give an answer to these two questions, it is not a complete definition.

I do not suggest that we ought to try to give a complete definition; I suggest only that it is well to recognize the incompleteness of any definition that we give. The meaning of a word like "education" is, to begin with, more than the sum of the meanings given in the dictionary, meanings which are no more than an account of the uses to which a word has been put by writers throughout several centuries. But, when a language is alive, such words will constantly be used in new contexts; they acquire new associations and lose some of the old ones; and every great writer contributes something to the meaning of the key words which he uses, those which are characteristic of his personal style. Some of these uses of the word die with him, others enter into the common language. The process of enrichment of the meaning of a word cannot go on indefinitely, without some uses of it becoming obsolete and forgotten: partly because our minds cannot contain them all, even if we are acquainted with them through our study of literature, and partly because an indefinite extension of meaning would lead to ambiguity and confusion. It is one of the advantages of the study of a dead language that it is more manageable, that the words in it have come to the limit of their meaning: there they are in the texts, and their meaning can be no more than what the authors, during the time in which that language flourished, have given them. We do not want our language to become a dead language; yet we are always trying, and indeed must try, however vainly, if we are to think at all, to fix a permanent meaning for every word.

We all mean, by education, some training of the mind and generally of the body also—so that we can include training for sport as well as for skills directed to some further purpose. But we can have no clear or useful idea of what education is, unless we have some notion of what this training is *for*. Thus we come to inquire what is the purpose of education, and here we get deeply into the area of

conflict. We can, as I have said, produce definitions which are valid within a limited but unstable context, as when we speak of "training to play our parts as citizens of a democracy." It is fortunate that there are areas of discourse within which we can agree that some of the words we use do not need to be defined, inasmuch as we are using the word in the same way—whatever that way is. But there is a point beyond which we become aware that the same proposition means something different to two people both accepting it—this happens very often in treaties and other political negotiations; and then we have to try to define one or more words which we had been employing under the impression that they meant the same thing to both of us. Just as a dogma may not have to be asserted until a heresy has appeared to provoke it, so a word may not need to be defined until we discover that two or more people are using it with a difference of meaning.

I do not suggest for a moment that we should abandon the attempt to define the purpose of education (and the definition of the purpose is an inevitable step from the definition of the word itself). If we see a new and mysterious machine, I think that the first question we ask is, "What is that machine *for?*" and afterwards we ask, "How does it do it?" But the moment we ask about the purpose of anything, we may be involving ourselves in asking about the purpose of everything. If we define education, we are led to ask "What is Man?"; and if we define the purpose of education, we are committed to the question "What is Man for?" Every definition of the purpose of education, therefore, implies some concealed, or rather implicit philosophy or theology. In choosing one definition rather than another, we are attracted to the one because it fits in better with our answer to the question "What is Man for?" We may not know what our own answer is, because it may be not fully conscious, and may be wholly unconscious; our answer is not always in our minds, but in the unconscious assumptions upon which we conduct the whole of our lives. The man who has made the definition which you accept or reject, wholly or in part, may be more aware or less aware of the implication of his definition than you are: at the moment when he makes the definition, and at the moment of your reaction to it, probably neither of you is aware of all that is beyond the margin of the field of discourse.

It might appear from what I have just been saying—if anything appears at all—that we ought to drop the question "What is education for?" and proceed to the question "What is Man for?" I do not know much about Man, but I am sure that our minds do not and cannot work in that way. We cannot discuss ultimate problems in a vacuum; the whole of our mind, sensibility, and experience of life must be

brought to bear upon them; part of our experience has been obtained in dealing with these secondary problems in their more limited contexts; and it is these secondary problems which provide us with the reasons for attacking the primary ones. Furthermore, the secondary problem is more nearly and obviously related to the practical questions which arise every day, and which have to be dealt with immediately in some fashion if we are to carry on at all. Nor do I deplore the fact that so many and various accounts of the purpose of education are given. We must go on inventing new ones. Each answer is a clue to what education means to somebody; an incentive to finding out what it means for oneself. If it meant exactly the same thing to everybody, the world would be a very dead place indeed; so we have no reason to deplore the fact, if we find the meaning of education as elusive as the meaning of the word *runcible.*

Note: Mr. Eliot's discussion of the aims of education will be continued in succeeding issues of MEASURE. This and the following articles are reprints of his lectures given in the fall of 1950 at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Committee on Social Thought. Editor.

BEYOND THE DREAMS OF AVARICE

Russell Kirk

SAMUEL JOHNSON was the author of this picturesque phrase; and, being a Christian moralist, he looked upon such dreams as wild and guilty fantasies. We have come a long way since Johnson's age. In the middle of the twentieth century, if one is to judge by the exhortations of our political and economic leaders, covetousness has been stricken from the catalogue of mortal sins, and the art of conjuring avaricious visions has attained respectability as an electioneering device employed by all parties. One can hardly be surprised at this aspect of modern emancipation; but certain curiously leaden and gross characteristics of the dream which the public is urged to embrace just now, its treacherous myopia, must disturb even the heirs of Bentham. "If men were ever to content themselves with material objects," Tocqueville warns, "it is probable that they would lose by degrees the arts of producing them; and they would enjoy them in the end, like the brutes, without discernment and without improvement."

In the center of Michigan lies my county of Mecosta, desolate swales covered, two generations gone, with hardwoods and pines. The trees are cut now, and potatoes, cucumbers, and beans grow with difficulty among the stumps. Early one summer evening I rode along a track which ran straight as a yardstick over the sand-rides and presently passed a farm: such a farm as one seldom finds in France or England, despite two thousand years of European cultivation of the soil. This farm consisted of a few acres of rock-strewn sand, encumbered with great stumps still deeply rooted; a crazy shed for a cow; a sagging outhouse; and a tarpaper shack that, what with the cracks in its walls and the sun then setting behind it, displayed the interesting property of translucence. Beside the house was situated a potato patch; a woman hunched in the middle of it, hoeing with desperation as the

daylight faded, her little boy at work beside her; she wore a black petticoat and probably little else. Moving on, I reflected upon the pragmatic concept of prosperity and happiness which we modern Americans endorse with infrequent misgivings.

It is doubtful whether we are a nation materially rich. The movies tell us we are, and so does the press. But after the movies we go home to the tiny "ranch-type" cottages of stucco that stretch (already decaying) mile on mile about Los Angeles, or to the dog-kennel shanties which house the poor of Charleston, or to the interminable dreariness which rings round the core of Detroit; and we read our newspapers in houses that line the filthy old lanes of North Boston, or the Skid Rows of Chicago, or the mean streets off Cleveland's Euclid Avenue. Some of us live in much better places, of course; but commonly we pay a scarcity price for comfort which means great sacrifice in other values of life. A contemplative man is inclined to believe that many Americans still are as fond of magniloquent estimation of their resources as they were in the day of Colonel Jefferson Brick. If America is wealthy, very often her wealth is of a sort peculiar to the twentieth century and alien to traditional standards of prosperity. We all know the new Pontiac beside the rotting cabin in the swamp, the comic books and movie magazines strewn in the back yards of tenements, the soda fountain and cocktail lounge prodigality of our time; and soon the television set in the slum clearance project will be equally familiar. So, after all our bragging, it is not strange that we Americans desire a better life; it is not strange that successful politicians prophesy the coming of a vague plenty. Our present life, however profuse, is not truly prosperous—leaving happiness quite out of consideration for the moment. Not only our poor are anxious for something better: our well-to-do also seem to feel that an indefinable quality is lacking, that even the neat tedium of American middle-class life is growing not only expensive but somehow barren. "We are a fussical and fudgical people," said John Randolph of Roanoke, and America has become more fretful since. I do not presume to weigh here the causes of our present discontent with ourselves; rather, I am concerned with the remedies proffered. Victorian England, oppressed by similar qualms, nevertheless rejected the diverse remedies or palliatives of Newman, Disraeli, and Ruskin. The sour dose which England swallows today seems a judgment. We Americans may sometime come off still worse, for our time boasts very few inspired theologians and statesmen and lovers of beauty that it can reject. Only one nostrum is popular with politicians and planners in this

troubled hour: more of the hair of the dog that bit us. We are invited to dispel the dreams of avarice by the specific of avarice realized.

During the past year or two, our most eminent exponent of this cornucopia theory of happiness has been President Truman, with his promises of the doubling or trebling of national income, his preference for economic enthusiasm over financial stability, his projects to introduce the American Standard of Living to the remotest and least industrialized backwashes of the world. But Mr. Truman is rather nostalgically reminiscent of an earlier president. He reminds one of President Coolidge: practical, blunt, average-American, utterly confident that in a nation's economy reposes its greatness and that the American economy is destined to grow and shine and swell. Swell it did, in Mr. Coolidge's administration; and presently, like most other swelling objects, it burst. If space permitted, it might be amusing to compare certain of Mr. Truman's prognostications and self-congratulations with parallel passages from Mr. Coolidge's addresses. Party labels make very little difference where philosophy, or the void that should be filled by philosophy, is uniform. Mr. Coolidge's and Mr. Truman's ideal America really is quite the same: an America which might be very rich in goods, but (this totally unsuspected by either gentleman) very poor in spirit.

A tinge of the Wilsonian era glimmers through the present national administration, too, as the aspirations of "Point Four" are revealed in their odd, generous, untroubled simplicity: we hear the echo of Colonel House's project for employing the restless ambitions of the great powers in a common exploitation of Africa, we glimpse the reflection of the Fourteen Points with their assumption that American principles are applicable, unmodified, universally. One experiences both sympathy and fright at the spectacle of this energetic naïveté, a great, brawny, good-natured Innocence in a world of men whose problems are infinitely more difficult of solution than economists and engineers, *per se,* dare admit to themselves.

A most disquieting aspect of the current readiness to oversimplify grave and pressing questions is the ignoring of the principle of diversity and the exalting of the principle of uniformity. "We shall build up the productive capacity of under-industrialized nations." Some standard of beneficent industrialization is assumed but never defined; the desire of such nations to be tinkered with is not investigated. President Truman and his advisers seem to maintain, implicitly, that spiritual and political and economic difficulties are soluble by reduction to a common denominator; and that denomi-

nator almost invariably is The American Way. A complacency at once touching and exasperating, this sentiment is perfectly natural, for we Americans have always labored, with varying success, to reduce mysteries to terms simple and popular; this has been at once a virtue and a vice of our intellectual constitution. In the present instance we contend, with an ingenuous provinciality, that all the world wants to be American. And by "American" we mean industrialized, motorized, Hollywoodized, capitalized, federalized, corporatized, and modernized. Displaying an impatient perplexity which is wholly sincere, we decry as reactionary or conspiratorial or Russian-influenced anyone in foreign parts who dissents from The American Way. We manifest a yawning ignorance of the venerable principle that cultural form and substance cannot be transported intact from one people to another. We claim that everyone except feudal barons or Reds longs for tractors, Bob Hope, self-service laundries, direct primaries, cloverleaf intersections, high school extracurricular activities, two evening newspapers, Coca-Cola, *Life,* and a stylish burial at Memory Grove Cemetery. President Truman, along with most of the rest of us, assumes that all people want happiness. He assumes that happiness is a constant quality, one and indivisible throughout the world. And he equates happiness with physical comfort. Austerity is Tartarus, luxury Elysium. By deduction, a man content with simplicity is ignorant and must be educated out of his apathy; a hydroelectric plant, a mechanical combine, or a carton of breakfast food may turn the trick for him.

We have no right to be hard on President Truman. When he talks of soaring national income, he is speaking in a vein truly popular with most elements in American society. If he does not see beyond the dollar sign, neither does Mr. Walter Reuther, who suggests draining the Serbonian bog of international hostility by appropriating a trillion dollars for gifts to all other nations. Neither does Mr. Robert Taft when he speaks as if the greatest evil of war is excessive expenditure. Neither does Mr. Leon Keyserling, when he assures us that "production" is the answer to Communism. Neither do the economists of the big corporations' Committee for Economic Development, when they declare that the aspirations of the new era will be satisfied by the "doubling of real wages before 1980." This myopia is not confined to any party or order. It is a condition of an origin thus described to Dr. Faustus: "I, sir? I am Covetousness, begot by an old churl in a leathern bag." Tocqueville tells us avarice is a plague to which America and democracies in general are perilously susceptible; but he also tells us that, forewarned, American democracy

may alleviate the consequences of this inclination.

> Materialism, among all nations, is a dangerous disease of the human mind; but it is more especially to be dreaded among a democratic people because it readily amalgamates with that vice which is most familiar to the heart under such circumstances. Democracy encourages a taste for physical gratification; this taste, if it becomes excessive, soon disposes men to believe that all is matter only; and materialism, in its turn, hurries them on with mad impatience to these same delights; such is the fatal circle within which democratic nations are driven round. It were well that they should see the danger and hold back.[1]

Now avarice does not consist in aspiring to be decently housed and fed and clad, according to one's real needs and nature. Rather, avarice is desiring more wealth and the vainglory that is leagued with wealth than one's soul can properly support. Avarice sometimes produces present poverty: the miser is proverbially ragged and lean. And I am afraid that when our politicians and planners and sociologists talk of output and distribution and real wages, they are not so much intent upon relieving genuine poverty as upon satisfying the dreams of avarice. They are not thinking so much of a contented America as of a shimmering America. They are not really interested in patching the tarpaper shack in Mecosta County; they would prefer to rip down the shack, pack off its inhabitants to Detroit, put them into state-subsidized housing, find them a television set to keep them out of mischief, and set them to work upon industrial production. Who will miss the second-growth pine and the little lake in the barrens once he gets his new Chevrolet? This, in essence, is the future which "capitalists" and "socialists" and "communists" all are arranging for us. It may be an efficient program. It is not a human program. It does not try to plumb intangible longings; it endeavors to satisfy the dreams of avarice. But avarice is insatiable, of course. The dehumanized being with the new Chevrolet may achieve satiety, but the ruling passion instilled in him will not let him rest. In Dante's Fourth Circle, the souls of the avaricious are damned to eternal strife and toil, the torment symbolic of the sin; and of all the lost creatures of Hell, they are those most thoroughly stripped of personality, forever nameless:

> That ignoble life,
> Which made them vile before, now makes them dark,
> And to all knowledge indiscernible.

Thus Dante's genius exposes the dreadful anonymity, the futile gross monotony, of a people dedicated to getting. No Men remain—only Producers and Consumers.

[1] *Democracy in America,* II, Bk. 2, Chap. XV.

Let us not imply the existence of any grand conspiracy to debase our poor muddled society into a collective economic enterprise with no loftier aspirations than those of a manufacturing corporation. However disordered at present, the social framework still is an immortal compact linking the higher nature with the lower, and few of our planners have any deliberate intention of subverting the foundation of communal existence. In America, at least, almost all proponents of calculated aggrandizement, consolidation, and "a higher standard of living" are quite unconscious of the tendency in such alterations; they seem to fancy that social and political institutions will continue precisely as now constituted, although much more prosperous. Our age, which has come alarmingly near to losing the historical sense altogether, forgets that institutions generally alter to suit the spiritual temper of a people. A people who have given up Fortitude for Avarice must endure a profound revision of their liberties and their character. If the public is told incessantly that the only important consideration in our polity is the American Standard of Living, in time the public will be oblivious to such trifles as justice, mercy, honor, and charity. An American public thus instructed will closely resemble, indeed, that Soviet public it despises.

Sufficiently representative of our present Coolidge-redolent confidence that our economy may be expanded infinitely, to our mighty betterment, is a recent article by Mr. Robert L. Heilbroner in *Harper's*. America's chief problem, one gathers from this essay, is the abolition of the comparative want existent in our ten million poorest families:

> *If* we keep on growing at our present pace—2 per cent per year—we *can* double our real earnings in our lifetimes, and before the next decade is out the average family *can* enjoy an income of $5,000. The opportunities for growth are there: the man who operates a bulldozer worked with pick and shovel yesterday, and the man behind the hoe today *can* some day sit behind a tractor. The troubling challenge is whether we will *in fact* push against our boundaries.[2]

Mr. Heilbroner wishes us well, of course, in this proposal that we substitute for the travail of the laborer the neuroses of the machine tender. Yet something ominous glowers behind this exhortation. One glimpses, perhaps, a countryside of the future, out of H. G. Wells or Aldous Huxley, nearly empty of inhabitants—those few who remain, submissively seated behind their tractors—while in gigantic, adequately policed cities are concentrated multitudes of people earning their guaranteed five thousand dollars per family, or ten thousand dollars, or twenty thousand, depending upon the decade. But I am

[2] "Who Are the American Poor?," *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1950.

not sure what these people do with their money—supposing they are permitted to dispose of earnings according to their whims. These are the communities E. B. White delineates for us in "The Day It Happened." At least, such is the planners' society one envisions if Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Truman and other optimists have been vindicated and things haven't gone to smash. Whenever a society fixes all its attention upon earning so many thousand dollars per head of population, I suspect that old devil Consequences ordinarily intervenes in short order.

Our quavers are summarily dismissed by the editors of *Harper's,* however, who in the same issue (apropos of the essay quoted on page 22 and another, "The Road that Food Built," by Myron Stearns) inform us:

> Such fears are meaningless in the light of the data presented by Mr. Heilbroner and Mr. Stearns. For both of these articles serve to remind us of the fundamental truth which underlies the democratic faith: that real wealth, like virtue and talent, is not a fixed total, too limited to permit everyone to have an adequate share. Neither education, nor health, nor the opportunity to use productive equipment is too good for anyone engaged in any department of productive activity. For the more of all three they have, the more real wealth they will produce.

Perhaps; although I was not previously aware that the "fundamental truth" of democracy was economic abundance. Yet before we Americans commence distributing "productive equipment" to everyone who has, or ought to have, a hankering for it, we might be wise to inquire on grounds purely utilitarian just what we propose to produce. "Wealth" has disconcerting properties, as Midas found out. The following three inquiries, severely practical questions, may indicate some of the difficulties encountered when a nation goes whole hog after a "higher standard of living."

1. *What will the dollars buy?* An income of $5,000 in 1980 has no conspicuous advantage over an income of $500 in 1890 if it will purchase no more in goods and services. Our increase in average income during the past decade has been paralleled by a proportionate increase in prices; and during an age of manipulated and almost infinitely inflatable currencies—with a swelling population into the bargain—I do not know what else we are to expect. True, the champions of an "expanding" economy inform us they are talking about "real income," not mere nominal wages. Yet "real wages" is an elusive concept. The workingman of 1950 has a higher "real wage" than his counterpart of 1900 earned, in the sense that he is the possessor of a gasoline engine of many horsepower; his predecessor probably did

not have even one horse. Nevertheless, the 1950 man may be poorer than his predecessor in terms of meat on the table, floor space in his house, durability of clothing, tranquillity of environment. And the "real wages" of 1980—supposing the aggrandizement of big government, big business, and big labor to continue at an increasing rate, as most planners expect—may in great part be drained off through taxation of "necessary luxuries." Without presuming to venture further into economic speculation, we ought to remind ourselves that the experience of the first half of this century indicates that augmented dollar income tends to be offset by price increase. Certain classes and occupations have indeed made absolute gains; but they have attained them, too often, in consequence of the diminution of the real income of certain other classes and occupations.

2. *What aspect will society present during this contemplated age of expansion?* Epochs in which men have been devoted to "production" and "more for all" often have been morally and intellectually despicable. Commonly they conform to either of these two social patterns: the anarchy of robber barons, or the tyranny of Five Year Plans. We have reason to expect that the state will encourage, supervise, and control many functions of such deliberate expansion; and we see already over the water—to pass by our own wartime and postwar experiences—the hectic flush and tawdry confusion of nations entering upon such arrangements. Professor Burn of the University of Durham gives us a peep into this new society:

> It is a scene in which such things as football pools, amusement machinery, and cosmetics enjoy the place of honour. . . . Wine and spirits, turkeys, sausages, suits of clothes descend upon the fortunate recipients; there are dinners at Grosvenor House, at the Garter Club, at the Garrick Hotel; hospitality is generously offered and gratefully accepted. Yet, in spite of these apparent advantages, it is not a very happy or agreeable society. Perhaps the reason is that too many people want too many things too urgently. One wants sherry casks, one wants paper; others want to float companies, to build canteens or to enlarge hotels. . . . We may imagine the stage festooned with forms, applications for licenses, refusals of licenses, cheques that failed to command confidence and agreements that failed to produce the desired result. Music is supplied by the ringing of the telephone, the prelude to ambiguous and improbable conversations; and through this half-lit jungle, from public dinner to government department, from government department to sherry party, glides the contact-man, at once the product and the safety-valve of this grotesque civilization.[3]

A time of rising prices, booming wages, and incalculable material alteration does not guarantee prosperity for everyone. It usually has meant privation and dismay for people with fixed or tardily altering

[3] W. L. Burn, "The Last of the Lynskey Report," *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1949.

incomes—the thrifty, the old, pensioners, teachers, the clergy, endowed institutions, the independent shopkeeper, the small farmer, and many other persons and establishments which constitute an element of stability and tradition in our civilization. Such a time, on the other hand, is well enough for the rough customer, the smooth operator, the rolling stone, the contact man, the gentleman who puts No. 1 first. This world-turned-upside-down excitement, this swirling flux, may seem to some people the proof of vitality in a society; however that may be, it also is the negation of intelligence in a society. In the long run, everyone comes to detest an existence so nervous and so precarious, and humanity endeavors to counteract vertigo by the application of arbitrary force. Somewhere there must exist a check upon will and appetite, Burke says, and the less check there is within, the more there must be without.

3. *What sort of people will we have become, supposing this economic expansion is accomplished?* Will we, like George Orwell's obscure protagonist, revisit the scenes of our youth only to find the country which "progress" has touched an abomination of shoddy new bungalows, juke joints, concrete, billboards, and jaded faces? Too many of us already have experienced that abysmally dreary survey. Some generations of indiscriminate getting and spending are certain to develop a remarkable type of man. The automobile will be his deity, and to it he will sacrifice sometimes nearly half his annual income, his domestic comfort, his family life, and his church. The television set will be his preacher, and inanity will compete with inanity for his attention, applying Gresham's Law to amusement. The state will direct and circumscribe his labor, and he will not object, for he will have forgotten the nature of freedom. He will live in a great ant hill of a city, and he will be precisely like his neighbors, and all of them will be decadent: for decadence, as C. E. M. Joad tells us, is to lose sight of an object in life. In the interest of efficiency, nonconformists and stragglers and dwellers in the waste will have been gathered into the city or eliminated, preferably through natural processes. And these descendants of ours will never realize that they are in the Inferno, damned for Avarice.

> The state of society now leads to such accumulations of humanity, that we cannot wonder if it ferment and reek like a compost dunghill. Nature intended that population should be diffused over the soil in proportion to its extent. We have accumulated in huge cities and smothering manufactories the numbers which should be spread over the face of a country; and what wonder that they should be corrupted?

Our planners have not yet comprehended the menace of consolida-

tion so penetratingly expressed here—though it was 1828 when Sir Walter Scott wrote the foregoing observation in his diary.[4]

Quite possibly I exaggerate the terror of the prospect. I have stated a few of the difficulties attendant upon the satisfaction of a national spirit of covetousness; perhaps these difficulties may be surmounted. Yet obstacles cannot be conquered until they are recognized, and it appears that our economic optimists are almost wholly unaware any objections exist to the *ends* they propose; they are obsessed with means. Make man rich, and of course he will be good and happy—such appears to be their remarkably ingenuous and antitraditional premise. Undoubtedly it is a democratic concept; but Tocqueville takes the trouble to remind us that it is also dangerously fallacious.

Confounding prosperity with strength and virtue is so perilous an error, indeed, that in most cases it will undermine material success long before the anticipated prosperity is attained. Down comes the house of cards, and philosophies less flamboyant but more cognizant of human frailty supplant economic pragmatism. In short, I question not only the ends to which the current spirit of aggrandizement is tending, but also the efficacy of its means. A stern Providence is likely to save us from those ends by dealing with cornucopia optimism as it dealt with Coolidge optimism, although varying its particular dispensation to suit altered circumstances. Neglect ends, and reasonably soon means are lacking too. Some instances of this cause-and-effect relationship, already experienced or about to confront us, I list here.

1. A good many men still prefer other possessions to material wealth—or, at least, are so thoroughly imbued with tradition that the possibility of exchanging their accustomed status for an economy more actively acquisitive hardly occurs to their minds. When we recently began endeavoring to reform the agricultural system of Greece upon a tractor basis, for instance, our people encountered tremendous difficulty in persuading peasants to combine their fields with their neighbors' in order to make mechanization possible; and even in cases where we did accomplish this task, our administrators found themselves confronted with a dismaying pack of quarrels over division of rights and yields. Our agricultural advisers to Greece professed inability to understand these petty objections. But if a Greek peasant should willingly surrender sovereignty over his little plot, he would not be a peasant; and if he should refrain from quarreling about it, he would not be a Greek. The further our planners try to extend their efficiency programs, and the more they

[4] Lockhart, *Scott*, X, 218.

ignore the diversity principle, the more the hostility they encounter will increase, not only abroad but at home. Our own farmers' repudiation of agricultural subsidies is a case in point. A planner almost always leaves prejudice out of his calculations; but prejudice, the wisdom of unlettered men, sometimes rises superior to books and drafting tables. Similar prejudices are encountered in other vocations and regions, and British socialism is being compelled to take cognizance of them. Even when planners force through their improvements in defiance of prejudice and local preference, they often are startled to discover that an immemorial knowledge lay behind the veil of stubborn ignorance: recently in Japan, for example, where we had proposed to bolster up the economy by mechanizing agriculture, we were forced to admit that the conservative Japanese farmer was right after all: by frugality and diligence he had already been coaxing the maximum yield from his meager soil, and our machines could do nothing for him—the mechanical calculator against the abacus, all over again.

2. Wealth can enervate, not only physically but morally. Gloss over avarice, call it efficient production, and you admit at the same time the six other deadly sins and a crowd of lesser ones. Without recommending general asceticism, still we cannot afford to forget that a man overfed, overheated, and sheltered from all the rougher features of the natural world soon becomes sluggish, petty, and selfish. Why, after all, should he be generous? If aggrandizement is the common object of society, there remains no moral check upon the means employed in acquiring personal wealth. Every price gouge is justified, every exorbitant strike demand, every judicious distribution of presents to public officers. And presently the material production of such a society commences to decline, from causes both too numerous and too obvious for us to trace here. As that society becomes both physically indolent and spiritually dirty, its mind begins to fail—for even an era of violent destruction is more stimulating to the intelligence of a people than the torpor of materialism. The imaginative man feels crushed, despised, and lets the world go hang. Now our industrial economy, of all systems man ever created, is that most delicately dependent upon public energy, private virtue, and fertility of imagination. If we continue to tell ourselves that prosperity is all, we shall find ourselves remarkably unprosperous.

Some months ago, the officers of the United Automobile Workers announced that their union intends to demand fresh wage increases annually for all members. The principle of aggrandizement and self-interest conceded, no reason exists why a union, or an industrial

corporation, or a political pressure group, should not plan to enrich itself at whatever cost to the community. No very profound knowledge of economics is required for predicting the consequence to the national economy of a wage rate perpetually increasing in a great industry, regardless of the economic condition of the nation. Money rapidly loses any remaining stability, saving becomes extremely difficult, and the industry in question eventually goes to the wall—presumably, in our age, to be acquired by the state when it totters near collapse. Well, why not?—supposing we are all of us pursuing exclusively the principle of physical gratification.

No inference is meant, by the way, that most of the people who want "planned production" are hedonists personally. Doubtless they go to church, instill altruistic sentiments in their children, and are generous with the time and money they devote to the community. We are speaking, rather, of the tone a society is liable to assume as the popular ideas consequent upon these planners' principles filter down into the public consciousness. "But are these ideas very *useful?*" Hume asked himself, upon coming to similar mechanistic conclusions; and, deciding they were quite the opposite of useful, he locked them in his desk. Hume had a proper reverence for the pagan virtue of prudence. Our present advocates of a production society, on the contrary, are anxious to promulgate their doctrines and prognostications as widely as possible. Well, suppose these forecasts turn out to be inaccurate; suppose (for national economies are distractingly erratic) that general income fails to increase as prophesied, or even shrinks; what will the public do and say in such a case? The public will have been told pontifically, for a considerable period, that it has a right to, and the virtual certainty of, steady economic betterment. Almost certainly a shocked people will speedily conclude that they have been the victims of a conspiracy, that someone has absconded with the cash; and it will be a very ugly public. However benevolent the intentions of our optimistic planners, the popularization of their ideas exposes us to the risk of a nasty social upheaval.

3. We Americans are not alone in this world. While we are intent upon getting, other nations will be pursuing different objects—or, at least, be pursuing what is ours. The demonstration of this simple truth has so often been performed by history that mentioning it is almost embarrassing.

A fanatic confidence in planned production—Mr. Keyserling's $350,000,000,000 a year by 1955, for instance—is not going to deter the Communists. For a long time they have been denouncing and ridiculing American materialism, to their very considerable advan-

tage among the peoples of Europe and Asia. We are increasingly held in contempt as boors who think that dollars can conquer ideas, and we find ourselves suffering from the unpleasant paradox of being represented by the archmaterialists of the Soviets as gluttonous dullards. Our own curious shamefaced reluctance to confess that we Americans do have values of spirit and mind has helped the Communists enormously. We have considered it a display of manliness to assert that we are interested only in "practical," dollars-and-cents concepts; and now we have found that our audience has judged us not manly, but puerile. The suspicion with which even the British are coming to view American civilization, the positive loathing of Americanism expressed (from a knowledge sometimes too scanty, perhaps) by conservative and intellectually eminent Continental circles, should be warning enough. I have observed in recent weeks that even our newspaper columnists are lamenting that loans and grants do not suffice to win the confidence of other states, and that we must reveal some spiritual aim, something akin to religion. When popular journalists can detect such a flaw in our polity, our planners have little time left to remedy the defect.

"Even Mormon counts more votaries than Bentham," Disraeli commented. Very few, not even the poorest of the poor, are sufficiently aroused by a call to the standard of "production" to give their lives for butter. Some abstract ideal man must have; and if we offer him none at all, he will accept the very crude and brutal ideal of Communism in lieu of a vacuum. The Soviet policy of starving this generation that future generations may surfeit, however injudicious a course, offers *something* to the desperate imagination of modern man; and "production," as it is advocated by our planners, seems to forget that humanity has anything to feed except a body. If we continue in our present intellectual sterility, we shall lose the adherence of the rising generation not only abroad but at home. "Jacobinism is the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against its property" —thus Burke. When our system confronts enterprising talent with nothing but an expression of sluggish vacuity, our darling "production" is liable to be conducted, very soon, under wholly different supervision.

We need not go far to seek ideals and imaginative systems to oppose to Communism. Christian morality, national freedom, natural law, dignity and justice—in the long run these (supposing we manifest a genuine belief in them) will vanquish the dreary professions of Marxism. But if the world decides that these concepts are mere words with us, and that our only real god is our belly, we may as well give

up fighting in Korea or anywhere else. No matter what the volume of its steel production, the nation which has disavowed principle is near to death.

The odds are, in short, that we may be saved from ourselves. We shall not be permitted to dedicate our hearts to the routine of production and consumption: the Communists, the peril of national atrophy which usually becomes apparent as materialism increases, and the stubborn prejudices of ordinary humanity are likely to prevent us from dehumanizing ourselves. We shall be forced to think of objectives less concrete, but no less real, than steaks and thermostats and radio shows. A merciful Providence, rather than knocking down our Tower of Babel, condescends simply to forbid us to build it. All the remainder of this century will be a time of alarms and battles. Such an age is a bitter and destructive lesson, but it is preferable to the degradation of humanity through avarice. Mankind, in the era that is opening, will be shamefully corrupt, as men always are in varying degree; but Men are not going to be reduced to the level of Things, as for a time it seemed they would. Mind and spirit will not be extirpated.

Yes, the projects of our efficiency experts and professional planners and utopian sociologists are going to be abandoned, as man is compelled by the necessities of a dangerous time to resurrect old simplicities and old virtues. But the danger remains that by the time we Americans realize the folly of materialism unalloyed, our planned-production people will have involved us so deeply in their arrangements that extrication will be excruciatingly painful. The public consciousness needs rousing now. More dreams of avarice will only make the waking a harsher shock.

Is it so very difficult, after all, to convince men that simplicity may be preferable to complexity, modest contentment to unrestrained sensation, decent frugality to torpid satiety? The first set of sentiments never has been wholly dormant in America. When I have occasion to discuss means of reinvigorating the traditional nature of man, I sometimes borrow from the sociologists and the psychologists the methods of culture analysis and case history. These useful types of demonstration, a good deal discredited by certain ends to which neopositivists and naïve professors have converted them, deserve rescue. Possibly they need redesignation, too. At any rate, I have found them serviceable in analyzing the aggrandizement doctrine of human happiness.

First, the culture survey. Ever since the anthropological tail began

to wag the sociological dog, professors of the social sciences have been embarking for remote islands and returning with blazing revelations for our enlightenment, such as the disclosure that marriage rites in Papua differ from those in Illinois and the surprise that political organization in Yap is dissimilar from political organization in Birmingham. Being properly impressed by those marvels of scientific observation, last year I, too, made my way to a remote and simple island—Eigg, in the Small Isles of the Hebrides, where I spent more than a month among Hebrideans, who have the advantage of being more intelligible than New Hebrideans. The scenery is desolately noble, the people are interestingly Gaelic and Papist, and the island has little more contact with progressive civilization than if it were in the South Pacific.

Most of the one hundred people of Eigg are crofters, dwelling in whitewashed cottages of rock, cultivating patches of ground four or five acres in extent, fishing a bit for mackerel or lobster, keeping a cow or two, feeding ducks and chickens, living very frugally indeed. Over every corner of Eigg broods the high, black, volcanic Sgurr, mists veiling its peak; and the crofts face upon the treacherous currents of the Sound of Rum. Quite likely the average cash income here is only a third of the thousand dollars Mr. Heilbroner considers poverty for an American rural family. These islanders have a priest and a Church of Scotland missionary and a doctor and a shop and an English laird who makes his appearance in summer. Their old communal spirit is much atrophied; and their fuel and some of their food is imported today. But they retain the placidity of people in whom traditional standards dominate will and appetite: no automobiles, no movies, no novelties, few radios, few ambitions—a condition of status. A rabbit shot in the morning, bread from the mainland, a couple of eggs, watercress gathered at the brook, vegetables from the croft, porridge, tea from the shop: there is no complaint at this diet. When the young men of Eigg came home from the war, they had small desire to escape into the progressive world; on the contrary, they tried very hard to find niches for themselves in Eigg, which is a difficult thing to manage in a shrinking economy that does not fit well into the pattern social planners have drawn up for Britain. The people of Eigg have the pleasures of affectionate families and quiet life, the consolations of religion, the security of those who do not expect efficient production. They need no police; there is no drunkenness; and one sees a great many smiles. I do not suggest that we can impose the social pattern of a little Hebridean island upon America, any more than we ought to think that New Hebridean mores justify

American slips from conjugal virtue; but I do suggest that the production-and-consumption view of society is neither the universal nor the traditional belief.

Now for the case history. Years ago, on a June morning, there came up to me a tall, stooped old man wearing a straw sailor hat and a black suit—my employer. He knew my face, but, like many other people, did not know my name; while I, like many other people, had the advantage of him in this particular: it was Henry Ford. He took me into the little brick shed where he had constructed his first automobile and told me of those days in '93—told me with obvious satisfaction, yet satisfaction tinged with anxiety, as if he wished to be sure of the approbation of the young. "It don't seem long since I built it." He glanced out the window at his enormous museum of a dead America, Greenfield Village, which encompassed us—and then stared across the wooded acres of his estate to the stacks of the Rouge Plant, hemmed about by the hideous streets of East Dearborn and Melvindale and River Rouge. He had been a farm lad in those flatlands once; and now he had obliterated the country that he knew as a child, except for this lifeless sanctuary of a museum within high brick walls. I am not sure he was glad. When men or nations destroy their past for the sake of aggrandizement, presently the dreams of avarice give way to forlorn longings after things beyond recall.

Well, many of us Americans are poor, and genuine physical poverty is unhealthy for the mind, too; yet a genuine spiritual poverty is worse. If, in this time of troubles, we find that we have social energy to spare, we shall do well to help the people who live stubbornly in the tarpaper shacks among the barrens and the people who cling to old trades and old ways at the risk of poverty. But the attainment of a general luxuriousness would be of very dubious benefit, and the sacrifice of personality and independence for "production" would be a pitifully ineffective way of defying the Communists, although it might turn out to be a means of joining the Communists. Our planners, intent upon consolidation, efficiency, standardization, and innovation, seem to have ceased to ask themselves what they are designing. Whatever they include in their plans, they exclude contentment.

No apology is necessary for quoting Tocqueville a third time, since though he is the best friend democracy ever has had, we read him too little. Tocqueville is writing here of a social condition to which he can put no precise appellation, for the past did not experience it. We recognize it today as the economic planners' ideal society; and, pondering his description, we find a measure of consolation for the

violence of our time that will compel us to postpone so many social alterations.

I think, then, that the species of oppression by which democratic nations are menaced is unlike anything that ever before existed in the world. . . . The old words *despotism* and *tyranny* are inappropriate; the thing itself is new, and since I cannot name, I must attempt to define it. . . .

The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men, all equal and all alike incessantly endeavoring to procure their petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest; his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind. As for the rest of his fellow citizens, he is close to them, but he does not see them; he touches them, but he does not feel them; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country.

Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare them for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood; it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labors, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances; what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?

Thus it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things; it has predisposed men to endure them and often to look upon them as benefits.[5]

For a generation it has been fashionable to plan for the attainment of this interesting state of society. Perhaps our tormented decade will employ guides endowed with imagination of a different quality. We may hope that some day when the production planners allege that they have the people at their back, in reality they will have turned their back on the people.

[5] *Democracy in America*, II, Bk. 4, Chap. VIII.

IMMORTAL MACHIAVELLI

A. P. d'Entrèves

THE TITLE of this paper is not the result of a misprint. The "t" is correct, though "immoral" is the adjective which more usually occurs to the mind when the talk is about Machiavelli. Well-nigh sixty years have elapsed since Lord Acton, prefacing Burd's edition of *Il Principe,* declared that "the ancient problem" of Machiavelli was extinct. Nearly ten years have passed since Jacques Maritain, in an address delivered in Chicago, proclaimed "the end of Machiavellism." Nevertheless, books on Machiavelli continue to be published at an impressive rate every year. Recently the Oxford University Press has found it convenient to produce a reprint of Burd's classic edition of *The Prince.*[1] Discussion on the subject of Machiavellism is as heated as ever. A worse sign still, questions on Machiavelli continue to be set in examination papers at the higher level. It may be worth while to assess the causes of this tenacious survival. Machiavelli's immortality is as good a subject as Machiavelli's immorality. I have the impression that there is still something to say about Machiavelli's real claim on posterity.

Machiavelli is a difficult subject. Perhaps it would be wise not to call him a subject at all. Problems cannot be solved merely by research and by scholarly knowledge. They require some meditation as well. Against Lord Acton's belief that the problem of Machiavelli is extinct, it is easy to quote Acton himself: "The authentic interpreter of Machiavelli, the *commentarius perpetuus* of the *Discorsi* and *The Prince,* is the whole of later history." Surely that *commentarius perpetuus* is still bitterly divided. It is nowhere more divided than in England. Machiavelli was a villain to Marlowe; to Bacon he

[1] A new translation of the *Discourses* has been published in England. The translator, a learned Jesuit, has prefaced the work with a lengthy introduction and has included painstaking notes.

was a very great man. We still have our Marlowes and Bacons. Two recent books provide significant instances.[2] What Professor Butterfield thinks of Machiavelli is summed up where he says that the Elizabethan dramatists were not so willfully off the mark as is ordinarily assumed. Professor Whitfield assures us that Machiavelli's intentions, without the slightest shadow of doubt, were blameless. Which of the two is right? Personally, I find it difficult to make up my mind. But I know that I cannot agree with the only point on which, strangely enough, both Butterfield and Whitfield are at one. They maintain that it is possible to approach Machiavelli without bias or prejudice. The one recommends that we should "avoid seeing the man through the work of a long line of commentators." The other is sure that he has succeeded in clearing Machiavelli from the "myths carried forward from the long legend that has been woven round him." I confess that I cannot help feeling deeply disturbed when I read Machiavelli. I prefer Lord Acton's sincerity. I am not sure whether I can avoid seeing Machiavelli through my own eyes. I am sure that we cannot avoid seeing him through the eyes of history. What plausible reason for reading *The Prince* can there be except that few other books have ever been so shattering? There were many political writers in Italy in the age of Machiavelli. Who except the scholar even remembers their names? But no educated man ignores the name of the "Florentine Secretary." Sooner or later he will come across *Il Principe*. Sooner or later he will come to grips with some argument which smacks of Machiavelli's unmistakable sourness.

Neither do I think that we have a right to believe ourselves in a more favorable position than our benighted forebears who created the legend. Each generation has its own Machiavelli. Our opinions are still divided. Not even on the fundamental issue of praise or blame do we find it possible to agree. I believe that we have still much to learn from the legend itself. The process by which it was established is one of the keys to our problem. It was through endless discussion that, for good or for evil, the real meaning of Machiavellism was disclosed to our eyes. If I were a profound German scholar, I would probably have called this paper *Machiavelli in Welthistorischer Betrachtung*. I prefer to be modest; I feel that I have to justify the adjective "immortal" which I have prefixed to a name which even the Oxford Dictionary holds out for abuse.

I shall begin by saying a word about the historical background.

[2] H. Butterfield, *The Statecraft of Machiavelli* (London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1940); J. H. Whitfield, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1947).

This is the usual line of approach for the historian, and it is right that it should be so. There can hardly be any doubt that the legend of Machiavelli was profoundly shaken the moment his teaching was related to the experience and the ideas of his times. I am not quite sure however that, with all its profession of objectivity, the century of history has not substituted one legend for another. I once came across a startling judgment by an undergraduate that "Machiavelli was the product of a barbarous country and a barbarous age." This is a rather curious reading of Macaulay and Burckhardt. I think I can see how nineteenth-century historians might have led an innocent soul to such extremes. There is in their explanation of Machiavelli's "immoralities" a slight note of apology, a clearly distinguishable smugness. There is no reason to laugh at the bourgeois respectability of a peaceful and enlightened age. But I think that this is a clear indication of the failings of the purely historical method. It is not enough to say that Machiavelli was the son of the Italian Renaissance; we should add that the very concept of the Renaissance is a product of historical interpretation. As such it has varied greatly, and it is destined to vary according to the taste and the prepossessions of every historian or group of historians. We have a different view of the Renaissance from that of Macaulay or Burckhardt. Not only have its boundaries been shifted backward and forward, but new material has added to our knowledge of events and of men. We are apt to feel different about the dramatic side of the story. We have learned—I think it was Paul Valéry who once said it—that "civilizations are perishable." We can therefore more clearly understand what Machiavelli and Guicciardini meant when they spoke of the great catastrophe of 1492-94 as the end of an epoch. We can even appreciate why in the minds of some of their contemporaries the thought of *"remedi estraordinari e violenti"*—of desperate remedies—could arise. Burckhardt's "aesthetic" interpretation of the Renaissance State as a work of art is no longer valid. Professor Chabod has conclusively shown how deeply the idea of the *principe nuovo* had its root in a social and political reality.[3] It was a product of the special conditions of Italy. But it was also—and Machiavelli shows himself to have been well aware of this in *The Prince*—the divination of a process that was at work all over Europe. Clearly, the knowledge of the "historical background" needs vivifying by a dash of sympathy and imagination.

So much for the authorities. Now for the sources. That *Il Principe* is not an isolated offshoot in Machiavelli's literary activity is now,

[3] F. Chabod, *Del "Principe" di Niccolò Machiavelli.* Biblioteca della *nuova rivista storica,* No. 8 (Roma, Albright, Segati e C., 1926).

with few exceptions, a generally accepted view. The best introduction to *The Prince* is the *Legazioni,* the memoranda which Machiavelli wrote for his employers while he was still in active service. They reflect and illustrate both his experience and the characteristic bent of his mind. The *vexata quaestio* of the correspondence between *Il Principe* and *I Discorsi* can be considered as finally settled. We need not be put off any longer by the apparent contradictions between the two. No serious student would venture to say that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* to discredit the Medici and that "he had his tongue in his cheek all the time." Nevertheless the old interpretation, that Machiavelli intended to call attention to the evils of political corruption (the interpretation that was revived in the Romantic age by Rousseau, Alfieri, and Foscolo), also contains some elements of truth. The problem for the modern interpreter is to show how Machiavelli's idealization of republicanism and his open advocacy of despotism could spring from the same source. The most revealing document for the understanding of his personality is the correspondence with his friends Vettori and Guicciardini. The admirable letter to Vettori, dated December 10, 1513, not only bears witness to the contemporary drafting of *Il Principe* and the first book of the *Discorsi;* it explains how the same man could pronounce the most devastating judgment on his age and his country while finding some consolation in the knowledge that decent conditions of life had existed in the past and perhaps still existed among the simple and unspoiled inhabitants of the most impervious regions of Europe. I have already made my reservations on the purely historical approach to Machiavelli. I would now like to add that, in my view, the historical explanation is valid only in so far as it is integrated with a psychological one. The balance of Machiavelli's production as a writer—the *Arte della Guerra,* the *Istorie Fiorentine,* the poems and the comedies—is of great importance for the study of this psychological case. But, compared to *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi,* they have only an accessory value. By themselves they would not have established the world-wide reputation which the name of their author acquired.

Let us then concentrate on *Il Principe,* the book to which *vox populi* has linked Machiavelli's fame. There are not many examples in history of a single book completely overshadowing the personality of its author. This does not mean that biographical details should be overlooked. Machiavelli was a citizen of Florence, and the Florentines, he once remarked, did not consider themselves ignorant or uncouth. He was an Italian, and the Italians, he told the Cardinal of Rouen, may not have known much about warfare, but about statecraft they

knew more than did any other people. His employment in the diplomatic service had gained him some experience in "things modern." His "continuous reading" of antiquity was more than a hobby, though less than a scholarly pursuit. He was neither a rich nor a powerful man. He never rose above a subordinate position. He was intelligent, ambitious, and passionate. This is the man whom a sudden stroke of misfortune drove to forced inactivity and to a condition near to despair. "Since fortune has willed it that I am unfit to argue about the silk or the wool-trade, nor about book-keeping or others, the only thing I can do is to think about politics. It is a question for me either of reasoning about the State or else to keep silent." Thus did Machiavelli write to Vettori from his lonely confinement in the country, shortly after his disgrace. He had original views about "States." He set out to expound them in a little treatise, *De Principatibus.* The book was a "ghiribizzo," a fancy. He thought it would prove to his friends and his foes that he had not wasted his "fifteen years of apprenticeship in the study of statecraft."

The fashion nowadays is to belittle the originality of Machiavelli's undertaking. A learned American scholar has written an elaborate study to prove that *The Prince* was "a typical book *De Regimine Principum.*"[4] His aim is to show that at best Machiavelli's little pamphlet can claim only an honorable (or dishonorable) place in the vast, bulky literature which "between the years 800 and 1700" included "some thousands of books and large, easily distinguishable sections of books telling the King how to conduct himself so that he might 'be clear in his great office.'" I cannot say how strongly I dissent from this view. It is certainly desirable that the modern reader of Machiavelli should be acquainted with the background against which an educated reader anywhere in Europe would have seen *The Prince* when it appeared. But I think that it is time that historians of political thought should be warned against the fallacy of reducing their task to a mere quest for precedents. Surely the wood is no excuse for overlooking the tree. The fact that the original title of *The Prince* is reminiscent of a traditional *genre* should not blind us to the staggering novelty in the treatment of the subject. It is here that the "legend" of Machiavelli is a wholesome reminder. Professor Allan H. Gilbert is forced to admit that certain sections of *The Prince* are "out of the path of the normal work *De Regimine Principum.*" They show a clear break with precedents. He in turn seems to forget that some of Machiavelli's most provoking doctrines can be traced

[4] A. H. Gilbert, *Machiavelli's Prince and Its Forerunners. The Prince as a Typical Book De Regimine Principum* (Durham, N. C., Duke University Press, 1938).

back to remotest antiquity. Yet the fact remains that it is from Machiavelli that these doctrines have since taken their name. Of the long array of books which Professor Gilbert has listed as possible sources of Machiavelli, none was an object of scandal as was *The Prince*. It marked the beginning of a controversy which still continues.

What, then, was the cause of the scandal? Machiavelli's immediate contemporaries did not seem to be surprised by the publication of this book, but perhaps this was only because they knew that the author was slightly bizarre (*"ut plurimum extravagante . . . et inventore di cose nuove et insolite"* was Guicciardini's description of his friend). Why, in one generation, did it gain unprecedented popularity? Where, in other words, is the originality of *The Prince?* If the importance of Machiavelli could be circumscribed by Italian life and letters, the first answer, of course, would be the freshness and novelty of his style. The almost naked simplicity of Machiavelli's language is a constant *démenti* to the current opinion that the Italians like their literature to be pompous, stilted, and ornate. But the literary merits of Machiavelli's writings are probably a matter not only for his fellow countrymen. It has been said that his was one of the first examples of modern scientific prose. The dazzling clearness of his arguments, the directness of his images, his mastery in carrying his points—all these merits survive the difficult test of translation. It ought to be refreshing for the historian to know that the man whom he is asked to study mainly as a historical figure was a great artist as well. But surely it was not the artist but the thinker who left a lasting mark upon history. It is not as a writer but as a political theorist that Machiavelli calls for attention.

Yet the moment we try to reduce that political theory to some basic principles the novelty of Machiavelli seems to fade away from our eyes. For one thing we must turn for those principles to the *Discorsi* rather than to *Il Principe,* though it is quite clear that also on that count the two works stand together in a common inspiration. That man is by nature unsociable; that political association finds its first spring in the necessity of self-defense; that the notion of justice is conditioned by the existence of authority; and that statesmen ought to act on the assumption that all men are bad—such a depressing philosophy was no invention of Machiavelli. We can guess the sources from which he derived it easily enough. I was, I confess, once rather taken aback in finding a young candidate suggesting that Machiavelli was a pupil of William of Occam. He certainly was not sympathetic to medieval philosophers and he probably would have thought that to read them was a mere waste of time. But if the statement means only

that Machiavelli as a political thinker must be classed among the voluntarists and skeptics, then I would implement it by saying that the best precedent for Machiavelli is the argument set forth in the first book of Plato's *Republic*. Machiavelli may well take his place in the chain that links Hobbes to Thrasymachus. But this would not yet be enough to make him a political thinker of the first magnitude.

Shall we then say that Machiavelli's novelty was the introduction of the inductive method in political science? Bacon's tribute is at hand. If Machiavelli's teaching could be reduced to a system, then Chapter XV of *The Prince* would certainly be one of its keystones. The method of the *verità effettuale* and its application to politics was one of Machiavelli's most daring undertakings. It is quite clear that in proposing that method he was aware of departing from precedents and of setting sail in an uncharted sea. Yet Professor Butterfield has recently endeavored to whittle down Machiavelli's originality also on this point. I am quite willing to grant that the rise of the inductive method was the result of a gradual transition. It is only in that process that Machiavelli's real meaning can be fully assessed. I am even prepared to go further than Professor Butterfield. If the assertion that Machiavelli was the first to introduce the inductive method in politics be taken to mean that he was the founder of a "political science" in the modern sense, then the statement would be completely misleading and untrue. Apart from the question whether a scientific treatment of politics is possible, the point is that Machiavelli had no intention whatever of construing a "science." His thought cannot easily be reduced to a "system." He had in him nothing of the sociologist or the planner, nor indeed of the "social scientist," of which there are so many in our universities. He had too deep a sense of reality to believe that things human could be brought under abstract categories. He had too direct an acquaintance with individuals not to make allowance for the irrational in all generalizations about human conduct. Hence that element of "elasticity" which Professor Butterfield correctly underlines in Machiavelli's discussions of policy. Hence also the survival (or reappearance) in Machiavelli's conception of history of strange *idola*—such as the concept of *fortuna*—which mark as it were the limit of human foresight and calculation, in the same way the notion of God's inscrutable will had marked the limit of human knowledge and freedom in the Christian interpretation of life. I fully agree with Professor Butterfield that, if anything, Machiavelli's method of the *verità effettuale* tends to slide into something approaching the modern historical method. It is not an anticipation of the so-called modern science of politics, which for all its scientific apparatus has not made us much wiser and is probably a contradic-

tion in terms. What Machiavelli propounds is a study of human nature in politics. The gist of his teaching must be sought not in the field of science but in history. But history involves for Machiavelli a problem of choice, and hence a problem of moral responsibility. It is to the realm of ethics that we must turn if we want to understand the impact of Machiavellism.

That I should venture to speak of Machiavelli as a moralist may well seem the last straw in a long sequel of paradoxes. May I suggest that I have some good authorities on my side. I think it was John Neville Figgis who pointed out that nothing is more untrue than to think of Machiavelli as "inspired by the passionless curiosity of the man of science." Croce even goes so far as to say that "with so many clear indications of his austere and painful moral awareness, it is surprising that there should be so much talk about Machiavelli's immorality." For truth's sake, let us do some justice to the author of *The Prince!* It is not simply a "handbook for usurpers." Machiavelli is not just a skillful "tout": why, he always chooses to back the wrong horse! The current notion of Machiavellism as "the pursuit of statecraft at the expense of morality" is grossly misleading when referred to its author. I grant that there are many passages in Machiavelli which justify the description of a man bent purely on the study of the technique of power politics, of craftiness merely for craftiness' sake. I grant that there is an undeniable narrowness in Machiavelli's horizon. He is carried away by his assumption that men act only out of self-interest. He is unable to repress his "aesthetic" admiration for willful designs carried out to perfection, regardless of their challenge to morals and decency. But as against these much-quoted instances of Machiavelli's "open invitation to immorality," how many examples I can find of a very different attitude, of a pathos and sadness which one would hardly expect from a wily and disenchanted politician.

> If men were all good, this precept would not be a good one. . . . A prince who wishes to maintain the State is often forced to do evil. . . . It is necessary for a prince, who wishes to maintain himself, to learn not to be good. . . . It cannot be called virtue to kill one's fellow-citizen, betray one's friends, be without faith, without pity, without religion. Such means may gain an empire, but not glory.

These passages from *The Prince* acquire a significant meaning in relation to Croce's remark which I have quoted. The *Discorsi* provide even more explicit statements.

> These courses are very cruel, and against all Christian and indeed all humane manner of living. And every man ought to avoid them, and desire rather to live a private man, than reign, so much to the ruin of mankind. Yet he that will not use that way of good, if he will preserve himself, must enter into this evil.

Is it going too far to suggest that a man who could write in such terms of the hardships of politics had not entirely lost the notion of good and evil? The inescapable consequences of *libido dominandi* had been a favorite theme in the Christian attitude to politics. It is the pessimistic vision of St. Augustine or Luther which Machiavelli recalls to our mind, not the optimism which we usually associate with the Renaissance. Far be it from me to present Machiavelli as still at heart a Christian. But I can see no trace in him of that *antike Naivität* which some modern interpreters have invoked to explain his "immoralism." The idea that nature is stained by corruption dominates the whole of Machiavelli's thought. The Christian imprint is there, although the faith is there no longer. Machiavelli's bitterness, his deadly seriousness are clear indications of a temper that has escaped the notice of those who have branded him as the very embodiment of irreligion. That pessimism and bitterness were, of course, inspired by the experience of contemporary events as well as by the lowest possible opinion of human character. It was the condition into which Italy had fallen that dictated Machiavelli's reflections. The Latin peoples were the dregs of mankind: Frenchmen, Spaniards and Italians, "which Nations together are the corruption of the world." He willingly admitted that in some remote part of Europe there might still be room for "religion and goodness." But the *verità effettuale* exacted the recognition that an appalling contrast existed between current policy and the standards of accepted morality. In a world where nothing more than lip service is paid to the traditional notions of good and evil, it is not only indispensable for the statesman "to learn not to be good"; it is necessary also to admit that men use, as it were, two entirely different currencies. Where they choose to live like beasts the law of the jungle cannot be ignored. "For," says Macaulay, "it is not possible to join serpentine wisdom to columbine innocency, except men know exactly all the conditions of the serpent; his baseness and going upon his belly, his volubility and lubricity, his envy and sting."

Bacon indeed had read and understood the teaching of *The Prince*: "we are much beholden to Machiavel . . ." I can see no reason why we should not try to do so in turn. There is one sense at least in which we can speak of Machiavelli's "immortality." He was the first to lay bare a contrast that is still tragically present in our hearts. "Machiavelli's teaching was like a dagger, thrust into the very flesh of European politics. No wonder that conscience should prance and revolt." I quote these words from the most exhaustive study that has yet appeared on the history of Machiavellism, Meinecke's *Idee der*

Staatsräson. The book is an indispensable guide to the study of Machiavelli. It provides convincing evidence of the existence of Lord Acton's *commentarius perpetuus.* Later writers coined a celebrated epithet to indicate the contradiction between the exigencies of politics and the dictates of morals. It gained a sinister reputation in Europe. The name was *raison d'état,* the reason of state. The doctrine of *raison d'état* was the means for making Machiavelli palatable and for accepting the elements of truth which his teaching contained. Under the cloak of state-reason the necessities of power politics could be justified and explained. It was a fine piece of hypocrisy. But hypocrisy is a tribute that vice pays to virtue. The political theorists and statesmen of those days had not entirely lost all feeling of sin. Neither had Machiavelli. In the age of indiscriminate warfare and of the atom bomb have we learned to do better? The rift that was opened by Machiavelli is still open. Like Parsifal's wound, our conscience is bleeding. But we still seem to have some use for Machiavelli's arguments. Recently I came across a letter in *The Times* which repeats almost word for word the distinction between the "good" and the "bad" use of cruelties. So let us make our peace with him on that score. Let us speak out our dismay at the havoc which the divorce of politics from morals has wrought in international affairs. But let us stop trying to outwit Machiavelli at his own game. The "end of Machiavellism" still lies ahead in a far-distant future.

If, nevertheless, Machiavelli is to be made the scapegoat for all our troubles, then I suggest that we should turn to another line of attack. There is another face of Machiavellism, which again was revealed only by later history. Did Machiavelli himself leave the door open for that interpretation? The question is well worth raising, for we stand here on the threshold of a new morality which is much more thoroughly irreconcilable with Christianity than the petty Machiavellism of *raison d'état.* Surely there is no excuse for reading into Machiavelli the doctrine of the rational will or of the ethical state. But it is quite possible to see how Fichte and Hegel, and in more recent days his fascist interpreters, could hail Machiavelli as the announcer of a new scale of values. The crux of the problem lies in that most equivocal concept of *virtù* on which much ink has been spent apparently without much success. It is not enough to say that Machiavelli's notion of "virtue" was dictated by his admiration for technical skill or by his reading of the classics. One of the most revealing sections of *Il Principe* is that which relates to the difference between Cesare Borgia and Liverotto da Fermo in Chapters VII and VIII of the book. They were both *principi nuovi,* both ruthless, un-

scrupulous adventurers, inspired solely by an unrelenting *Wille zur Macht*. What, then, was the difference between the statesman and the assassin? That Caesar had *l'animo grande* and *l'intenzione alta* was not a sufficient justification for citing him as an example of the "virtuous prince." It was after all only Machiavelli's personal appreciation. He was well aware of the terrible stain that blighted the memory of the Borgia prince. But in Chapter XVII (the chapter on cruelties) Machiavelli could propose an objective standard: he claimed that the greatness of Cesare Borgia consisted in the fact that he had laid the true foundation of a powerful state. This was his positive achievement: he had "reconciled the Romagna, unified it, and restored it to loyalty and peace." The English word *reconciled* does not render the full meaning of the Italian *racconcia*. It is clear that the establishment of law and order, however achieved, is the yardstick by which the greatness of a statesman must be measured.

What, then, is Machiavelli really after? Does he, to use his own revealing words to Guicciardini, purport to show us *"la via dell'Inferno per fuggirla,"* or is he, however confusedly, striving to find some new *"chemin du Paradis"?* He never tires of extolling the honor and the glory that are the rightful reward of the "virtuous prince." Indeed at one point he goes so far as to borrow wholesale from Christianity the idea of a possible "redemption" of corrupted mankind, though recasting the idea itself on an entirely unchristian pattern. He dreams of a new and heroic interpretation of the Christian religion according to "virtue" as against the slothfulness *(ozio)* of his contemporaries. A man who could say of himself that he "cherished his country more than his soul" seems to have found a way out of the utter despair into which the wantonness of politics has cast him. The last chapter of *The Prince* is not simply a rhetorical peroration. It is one of the great manifestoes of the new religion of patriotism, the "Marseillaise" of the sixteenth century, as it has been very aptly described.

No doubt, if we accept this interpretation, an entirely new line of approach to Machiavellism is available. The apparent "immoralities" of politics are lifted, as it were, upon a different plane. They do not need to be justified any longer, for they are justified in themselves, and therefore moral. The doctrine of means and ends, that gospel of cheap Machiavellism, assumes a new meaning. "Let a prince therefore aim at winning and maintaining the State: the means will always be judged honourable and praised by everyone." This seems to imply that the means cease to be bad altogether, which is certainly not the sense in which that doctrine was imputed to the Jesuits in later days.

The well-known chapter in the *Discorsi* on the course that was taken by the ancient Romans when the life of the state was at stake provides a further instance.

> Where the deliberation is wholly touching the safety of the Countrey, there ought no consideration be had of just and unjust, pityfull or cruel, honourable and dishonourable, but rather, all other respect being laid aside, that course is to be taken which may preserve the life and maintain the liberty thereof.

This may well be interpreted to mean that "the life and liberty of the country" is not simply an excuse for brushing aside the old standards of morality. It is the ultimate aim which men ought to set themselves in politics as well as in morals. It not only justifies but sanctifies their deeds.

Whatever weight such arguments may carry, there is something not entirely convincing about them. We may be willing to grant that the desperate conditions in Italy required desperate remedies. We may bring in the example of other countries to show that the birth of the "great Leviathan" was the result of a painful travail. We may even be compelled to admit that the price was worth paying since it put an end to internal strife and anarchy in large sectors of Europe. But this, as we know, does not mean that Machiavelli was entirely insensitive to the sweat, the tears, and the blood that had to be shed in the process. I cannot find any mention of the God-state nor of other metaphysical abstractions in the sober and corrosive prose of Machiavelli. I can see no "inherent morality" in political action as he conceived it. All I can find is the sad recognition of an implacable law which we call nowadays the survival of the fittest. It is that law which, according to Machiavelli, must needs govern a society that is not a community of saints. I have already pointed out the narrowness of Machiavelli's horizon. It is not true that "all disarmed prophets were doomed." But it is true, alas, that "States are not held with Paternosters." Machiavelli's is a judgment on history as well as on human nature. Whether he is too pessimistic about both is a question that still remains to be answered. Both the historian and the moralist must therefore have their say about Machiavelli. Should the historian agree that the law which Machiavelli described did in fact preside over much of our history, we may still feel that this is not yet a decisive argument to convince us of his greatness. But supposing that the moralist should say that a frank recognition of evil is better than hypocritical self-deception. Supposing that the political philosopher should become aware that, as Vico once put it, it is on the dregs of Romulus that the Republic of Plato must be grafted. Supposing indeed that we should use *The Prince* as a tonic to teach us a

lesson in humility: surely in that sense it might be possible to argue that there is something "immortal" in Machiavelli.

There is an image in *The Prince* that has always struck me as a consoling allegory of politics. It is the image of the Centaur—*mezzo bestia a mezzo uomo.* The statesman must know how to "use the man and the beast": for politics partakes of both natures. It is no use shutting our eyes to what men actually do when the matter is one of life and death, and indeed of survival. The "beast" is there all the time, lurking behind the delusive splendors of a civilized existence. I sometimes like to think that, in resorting to that image, Machiavelli may have had in mind the allegorical painting of his fellow citizen Botticelli. It was not many years since the master, fresh from Neoplatonic influences, had painted it to please and perhaps to admonish a Medicean prince.[5] Machiavelli must have been well aware of its meaning. Pallas alone can vanquish the Centaur. Human reason alone can tame the subhuman element in politics. Personally, I cannot help feeling happier with a doctrine that teaches me to look straight into the face of the fiend than with one which advises me to besprinkle it with holy water.

A COMMENT ON "IMMORTAL MACHIAVELLI"

I have read Mr. d'Entrèves' article several times without being so fortunate as to understand it. There seems to be some sort of discussion going on among professional historians and political scientists about the relationship of Machiavelli's work to that of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. What the layman wants to know is: what did Machiavelli say, and was he right or wrong?

When M. Maritain, ten years ago in Chicago, proclaimed the end of Machiavellism, he surely did not proclaim that it had ended, but that it should. No one will suggest that M. Maritain is so simple-minded as to believe that we have seen the last of Machiavellism, when every child knows that it is the dominant political doctrine throughout the world. Nor do I grasp what Mr. d'Entrèves means by saying that he prefers to look the fiend in the face, rather than to

[5] E. H. Gombrich, "Botticelli's Mythologies. A Study in the Neoplatonic Symbolism of His Circle." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* Vol. VIII, 1945.

besprinkle it with holy water. He is apparently referring to M. Maritain; but does he think that M. Maritain has repudiated original sin? M. Maritain has often decried the error of angelism. Can we believe that he has suddenly concluded that men have suddenly become angels and that power politics has therefore disappeared from the earth?

I would agree with Mr. d'Entrèves that Machiavelli is immortal, because he gives the most concise and effective statement of a bad point of view. Since men are not angels, this statement and this point of view must always appeal to them. Because of the ambiguities of Mr. d'Entrèves' article, it seems important to insist that this point of view is bad.

Mr. d'Entrèves says that the best precedent to Machiavelli is the argument set forth in the first book of Plato's *Republic*. This seems clear enough. Thrasymachus is the proponent of the doctrine that justice is the interest of the stronger; Machiavelli restates it for modern times. Mr. d'Entrèves goes on: "It is to the realm of ethics that we must turn if we want to understand the impact of Machiavellism." We then learn that the current notion of Machiavellism as the pursuit of statecraft at the expense of morality is grossly misleading when referred to its author. This is so, we are told, because Machiavelli was saddened by the facts of life. He regretted that men were so wicked that it was necessary for a prince who wished to maintain himself to learn not to be good. Although Mr. d'Entrèves will not present Machiavelli as a Christian, he says that "the Christian imprint is there, although the faith is there no longer." He does not hesitate to associate the names of St. Augustine and Luther with that of Machiavelli.

I grant that Thrasymachus shows no traces of regret. He had not had the benefit of the Christian revelation. Since Machiavelli had had the benefit of it, it is not remarkable that he shows some effects of it. He is all the worse for that, because, although he had a notion of good and evil that Thrasymachus did not have, he still gave the same advice. And surely to align Machiavelli with St. Augustine and Luther without pointing out that his political conclusions do not remotely resemble theirs is grossly misleading.

The question for any man of action is whether the end justifies the means, and, in particular, whether the end of keeping himself in power justifies any means. The most favorable interpretation of Machiavelli is that he does not discuss the end, that he says, "I will not tell you that you are to keep yourself in power by any and all means; I will merely show you what means you must employ if you

have determined that this is your end." This is like saying, "I will not tell you that you should murder your enemy; but if you have decided to do so, I will show you some interesting ways of doing it."

Mr. d'Entrèves finds in Machiavelli an end beyond the preservation of the power of the prince. It is the establishment of law and order. I may remark in passing that, though such an end may measure the Machiavellian greatness of a prince, it does not measure his adequacy. He is adequate as a pupil of Machiavelli if he maintains himself. But, taking the establishment of law and order as the Machiavellian ideal, Mr. d'Entrèves says that the apparent "immoralities" of politics do not need to be justified any longer, for they are justified in themselves, and therefore moral. Then he goes on: "Whatever weight such arguments may carry, there is something not entirely convincing about them." Mr. d'Entrèves does not say what is missing from these arguments. In fact he does not say whether Machiavelli was right or wrong. All he can find in Machiavelli is "the sad recognition of an implacable law which we call nowadays the survival of the fittest." Mr. d'Entrèves will not say whether there is such a law. He leaves that to the "historian." But, oddly enough, if the historian agrees that there is such a law, "we may still feel that this is not yet a decisive argument to convince us" of Machiavelli's greatness.

Mr. d'Entrèves appears to think, though in his discussion of *raison d'état* he has a good word to say for it, that on the whole hypocrisy is a bad thing. His paper seems to be an appeal to face the realities of political life as Machiavelli did and not to engage in "hypocritical self-deception."

I am at a loss to know to whom this appeal is addressed. As Mr. d'Entrèves himself suggests, the reiteration of this appeal seems like bringing owls to Athens (see Thrasymachus) or coals to Newcastle (see *raison d'état*). The consolation that Mr. d'Entrèves derives from Machiavelli's image of the centaur he could also have found in Aristotle's less beautiful but equally accurate description of the rational animal. The world today is full, as the world has always been, of political "realists" who have the Thrasymachus-Machiavelli view of human nature and who use it to justify complete political amorality. Let us by all means look the fiend in the face; but let us not forget that he is a fiend.

ROBERT M. HUTCHINS

TWO POEMS

Elder Olson

THE MIDNIGHT MEDITATION

I

Midnight: I pluck the curtains back, look out
Into a city clouding, silently sinking,
Falling away, fading, engulfed in gloom.

Already ruinous!—the last catastrophe
And final nightfall visibly at hand;
And the wind, now, the wind around a ruin,
Or the wild sea-race through the long sea-halls.

O semblance desolation, seeming is truth:
The city of yesterday that here goes down
Is gone forever, like sunk Lyonesse;

Gone forever as Babylon or Troy
Or towns faint-glimmering that profoundly lie
Drowned in the depths of endless centuries.

II

Immensity, like the darkness cast from the cloud above
And the darkness earth-born, I am lost in you
Deep as profound towns buried in Time.

I have no mind to mourn with a mournful season,
Mock-mourning of the autumn leaves, of the keening wind,
All savage rites kept by the ancient earth.

I mourn, not grieving, no, at grievous death,
But at the resurgence after death,
And the death again, and senseless resurgence still.

Cycle on cycle, wheeling Infinity,
Boundless Abyss where all things rise and fall,
You are my sickness: the terror of which I dream, and to
which I awake.

Nightmare phoenix ceaselessly renewed,
Riddling sphinx indifferent to all response,
Paradoxical chimera guarding chaos,

How have you not betrayed us in our journeys,
As the simple immensity of sombre wastes
Turns the lost traveller in a circling track.

Infinity, patient and silent as a beast following,
How subtly have you stalked us in all travels:
Indeed, wherever we went, we were yours at last:

—You, with bones of empires in your craw,
Swallower of whole civilizations, and dainty yet,
Scrupulous still, to capture a lone traveller.

III

Let children ride the year's sweet carrousel,
Glitter of revolving winter and spring;
We know that faëry wheel and where it takes us.

The illuminated heavens, promising enchantment
Like powerful symbols in a magician's book,
Reveal at last a single simple meaning.

In infinite time the cities burst like rockets, empires gleam
and are gone,
The bright seas run like quicksilver,
The mountains rear and recede with the waves' motion.

Cloudy Time obscures, yet dulls not so
But fragments of our history survive
To mark how all our action was but motion,
Wind's course, flame's thrust, turnings of the whirlpool.

Patriot, scholar, poet, soldier, saint,
Nothing will eventuate from your anguish:
All faiths and arts are figures on a wheel.

Nothing will come of all these revolutions:
Agonies of the liberator
Prepare new tyranny for new overthrow.

The straight line returns upon itself.
Is infinite, too: all contraries are one.

IV

I thought once I should have at a man's age
Some wisdom hard and pure as diamond
To make the center of a new steadfast world,

Or some bauble, at least, for a toy—accurate enough
To catch the universe in its gay reflex,
Like Paris reflected in a jewel,

And perhaps after all I have it: at last recognizing
The treadmill as a treadmill: asking of my empty journeys
Nothing, in the end, but to spare my private nobility;

Dwelling at last in a house on the cloudy brink
Where the windows offer no prospect,
And the balconies give on nothing;

Knowing that though we speak with our old sophistry
Of the dawn of hope, the dawn comes endlessly,
Day after trailing day, but our hope never;

As now the new day comes, with its new horrors
Still inert, its tyrannies still voiceless,
And the future rises, like these light-dripping towers,

Like a city rising from the infinite sea.

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POEM

O lands shift, grass grows, moon rots, wind
Blows: the statue, broken, furnishes the sling;
Till the beast stares at high memorials fallen.

Then towns are grains, and the sun will light the theater
of the rocks,
The robed waves, like a tragic chorus, move
Still in the slow dance over sea-caves, sea-graves,
sea-mountains, sunken empires;

Thunder and wind shall keep their ceremonies,
The rain its ritual; the seasons in solemn passage
Perform their antique mysteries, unprofaned:

Signifying that the Earth remains the Earth,
Patiently having suffered our harsh history,
The weight of our ponderous cities, the wounds of our wars.

A REPORT ON JAPANESE YOUTH

Iwao Ayusawa

CHUO SEN is an electric railway that cuts through the center of Tokyo, constituting with its heavy traffic the main artery of the metropolis. Facing the railway stands a castle-like building, small but impressive, and above it a red flag flutters in the wind. Across the top of the building is painted in large letters this appeal: "Patriots! Unite for Peace and Independence!"

The people of Tokyo are well aware that this is the headquarters of the Communist party of Japan and that they are the "patriots" appealed to by the Communists. What impression does this plea make on the Japanese people, and particularly on Japanese youth? This is a question of more than academic interest. The summer of 1950 saw war flame as close to Japan as the Korean peninsula, and at the moment this is written peace has not yet been restored. The war in Korea has emphasized the strategic importance of Japan in relation to the whole of eastern Asia. In fact, no one considering the future of Asia can doubt that Japan is far more important than Korea, from both the military and the political viewpoints. And since increasingly heavy responsibilities are being transferred to the young people of Japan, it is important for the West to know what they are thinking.

Among those who are favorably attracted by the Communist appeal are a number of university and college students, ministers and members of Christian churches, and workers in factories, banks, and so on. Those among them who express an ardent desire for peace and also naively wish for independence are likely to be young and rather immature or "unsophisticated." They are the enthusiasts who would, for example, unhesitatingly take part in a communist peace parade, for they are as a rule unacquainted with the communist character and practices. Then there is a small number of young people who

are wary of what they believe to be the intentions of the Communists but are nevertheless willing to take the risk of joining them for peace, from what might be termed "religious motivation." But this group is diminishing and will probably soon disappear. Needless to say, there are also Communists and Communist sympathizers to be found in any group of, say, more than a hundred persons. They are the virile and active element in any group into which they have infiltrated.

Now, one basis for the Japanese people's firm belief in peace is the new constitution, in which "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." This same article also says that "the right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized," nor will Japan ever maintain land, sea, or air forces, or any other war potential. In recognizing the dangers inherent in unilateral disarmament in the world today, the Preamble declares: "We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, *trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.*" And further, the Japanese people "desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want." The declaration concludes: "We, the Japanese people, pledge our national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all our resources."

Thus the people's desire for peace has a firm formal basis. It is true that Japan was deprived of her armaments as a consequence of being defeated in the Second World War, and that the new constitution with its peace clauses was adopted under military occupation. Hence the impression is given that the constitution is not of genuinely Japanese origin. Nevertheless, the earnestness of the Japanese desire for peace cannot be challenged. It is particularly pronounced among two groups: the young people belonging to religious organizations or fellowships and those who participated in the Second World War and experienced the horror and the futility of modern war. The latter group is by far the larger, but the two are not mutually exclusive. Those having religious convictions remember regretfully that in the last war the churches and religious groups professing faith in the love of God, the brotherhood of man, and pacifism failed miserably to vindicate their faith. These young people are now saying piously, "We must not fail again! Never again an abject surrender

to force!" But their number is not large, and how they will face the next trial is uncertain.

Among those who returned from the fighting, a strong peace sentiment seems to have been kindled by the recent publication of a book called *Kiké, Wadatsumi no Koé (Listen to the Voices of the Sea).* The book is a collection of letters, notes, and selected passages from the diaries of those who died in battle, leaving behind them records of the disillusionment, despair, and agony they experienced in participating in a disastrous conflict. Some of the soldiers, of course, had volunteered to join the forces, believing that they were participating in a "Holy War," and willingly gave up their lives in the "suicide corps" for the glory of the Empire. But far more numerous were those who had been forced into a war that they could not reconcile with their conscience. Creating a sensation, *Listen to the Voices of the Sea* rapidly became a best seller and was made into a moving picture. Although the film was but a shadowy reproduction of the gruesome tales told in the book, the title alone was sufficient to ensure the overcrowding of any theater at which it was shown. This outburst of public enthusiasm is generally believed to indicate the widespread hatred of war among the Japanese people. But in fact, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were enough to instill pacifism in the minds of many Japanese, and the book has served as a reminder of the horror of the Second World War. The pacifism of the Japanese springs more from experience than from theory.

No less strong than the desire for peace is the desire for independence, which is normal and legitimate and scarcely needs justification. It does not necessarily imply any feeling against the Occupation, nor does it indicate any lack of appreciation for America's shipments of food, fuel, and other materials, which have repeatedly rescued Japan from the hardships of postwar economic difficulties. Under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, the following conditions must be fulfilled before the occupying troops withdraw and Japan regains her independence: Japan must be completely disarmed and all troops disbanded; war criminals must be punished and militarism rooted out; the Japanese government must have taken steps to ensure freedom of speech, religion, and thought, to establish basic human rights, and to remove all obstacles to the development of democracy; the people of Japan must have, by free expression of their will, established a peace loving and responsible government. The majority of Japanese students and other young intellectuals are familiar with these terms and believe that, for the most part, they have been met. Hence there is eagerness among them, and among the Japanese people

as a whole, for concluding peace with even a limited number of the Allies, as the present world situation indicates might be necessary. Ideally, of course, the peace treaty should be signed by all the Allies. Since the early part of this year, opinion in Japan has been sharply divided between those who believe that the peace should be "complete and over-all" and those who urge a separate peace with the United States and the other Western powers because they believe that the uncompromising attitude of the Soviet Union makes an over-all peace impossible. The young people share this division of opinion, approximately equal numbers being on each side, but all are anxious for independence. Those who favor a separate peace believe that it would expedite the attainment of independence; those who favor only a complete peace fear that the exclusion of Russia might be regarded as an overt hostile action and thus precipitate a crisis endangering Japan's security.

If, as has been seen, the Japanese young people do desire peace and independence, how do they react to the Communists, who promise these things? Since our daily newspapers are replete with accounts of crimes allegedly or actually committed by the Communists, I have been surprised to hear many students, themselves non-Communists, speak favorably of communism. What is it that attracts them?

There is wide acceptance of communism among the more naive young people, who accept it as a challenge to the present social order. Communism is offered not as *a* substitute for capitalism but as *the* substitute, the only alternative. According to their belief, capitalism is doomed to decay and is collapsing. In the view of a number of college students who have only general knowledge of economics and economic theories, the Communists may be wrong in planning to overthrow the present social order by violence, but "communism alone prescribes the cure of most of the ills and defects of capitalism." Hence, to many young students communism is the answer. They like it because it is "radical," going to the "root" of evils "unequivocally and courageously." One may point out to them the fallacies of Marxism or of communist theory. They reply, "Ah, but Marxism is a theory, complete in itself as a theory. Application of a theory to actual politics is a different matter." For young people who adore complex and abstruse theories, dialectical materialism has great allure.

Although critics often accuse Marxists of materialism because of the materialistic interpretation of history in Marxism, many of the young men drawn into the communist movement are far from being crude, self-seeking materialists. As a matter of fact, they are often quite the opposite—unbalanced, to be sure, but idealists of the most

fervent kind. In a movement that protests vehemently against the social injustices of the world they find a righteous indignation. And so they join, knowing of the risks and ready to meet persecution in a spirit of self-sacrifice.

Communism is presented as a world movement "to emancipate the downtrodden races and the exploited classes." This has great appeal for the young people of Japan. During and after the Second World War, which shook the foundations of the European colonial empires, many a race which had been ruled over by a Western power won autonomy or independence. The Communists have availed themselves of this opportunity to inflame and spread the sentiment of revolt among those recently or still under Western control. The appeal of the Communists to the "patriots" of Japan to "unite for peace and independence" is simply a part of this communist world policy. The significance of this appeal to the subject nations cannot be overrated.

Alluring tales are told of the fantastic achievements of communism in the Soviet Union. Economics students hear of "the great strides unprecedented in history" made in industry, and they are told that "in that first Communist state in history to have abolished capitalism, unemployment exists no longer." To Japanese students and workers, the latter story is the most impressive of all. Since the war an increasing number of impoverished students have been forced to engage in "Arbeit" (a word used in Japan to mean students' labor), but at the same time the volume of unemployment has been growing. Consequently, there is widespread unrest, and communism has taken on a Messianic character.

The Communist party, unlike others, has clear aims and definite programs of action. Moreover, this party alone holds unchallenged authority over its members. Amid the present confusion, it seems, *authority* and a clearly defined *program of action* have a peculiar attraction.

Proverbially, almost, the Japanese are "patriotic." For generations they have prided themselves on this national characteristic. There is little doubt that the Communists were thinking of this alleged soft spot in the Japanese psychology when they addressed their appeal to the "patriots." Is it still true that the Japanese are patriotic in the commonly accepted meaning of the word? I do not believe that this is true among intelligent and thinking young people, and their number seems to be increasing. Many say that they are patriots, but the majority ask, "Patriots in what sense?" They love the country of their

birth, but they are more reluctant to sacrifice their own lives and hurt others in times of national emergency. Nor is their country always right. Only three years ago the Emperor, "sacred and inviolable" under the old constitution, disavowed his divinity in an address to the nation.

Under the spell of patriotism many a crime has been committed. Patriotism smacks of the militarism and suicidal nationalism that brought disaster. It is inseparably allied with the imperialism and aggression of prewar Japan. Loyal Japanese youths were turned into criminals by appeals to their patriotism. They do not wish to be patriots again. The Empire has crumbled; there is no more glamor, no more authority, in the state to which they gave their loyalty. Frustrated by defeat, they stumble about in the dark or look for a new authority higher than the state. Many of them are turning enthusiastically to the United Nations or to the authority of a religion, either Christianity or one of the countless "new religions."[1]

I have encountered a large number of young people who express strong antipathy to the Communists because they believe them to be nationalists rather than internationalists. They know that in the *Communist Manifesto* are passages declaring that Communists must stand for the international proletariat as a whole. "The Communists are reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality. The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got." The Communists seek not peace but revolution. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social systems. "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution," says the Manifesto. Accordingly, when the Communists call on others as patriots and invite them to unite for independence, they are belying their doctrine. By urging this, they hope to incite rebellion. This, in brief, is the verdict of anti-Communist young people against the Communists' appeal for peace, independence, and patriotism.

There are, of course, a number of cases of fear and bigotry, as well as skepticism. The group I describe as bigoted is not large, but it has a deep root in the traditional ideology of militarism. It consists of the more mature men, trained in the military or naval academy or reared in the atmosphere that created the desperate men of *Kamikaze*. They are not strictly young men, but they are still capable of exerting a powerful influence on others. To them, "war springs from the deep instinct of man." They are contemptuous of the peace clauses in the

[1] Immediately after the war forty-three religions were registered in Japan; there are now 474. These new religions have followers of all ages.

new constitution. "We, in order to assert equality among the nations, must be realistic."

On the other hand, I have encountered no small number of men who fear and hate the communists, or are skeptical of them, and object to any move for peace or independence on that ground. They are no less lovers of peace than those already mentioned, and wish independence no less, but simply because they fear or hate the communists, anyone joining in a peace demonstration or favorably inclined toward a peace organization is likely to be condemned as a communist or a communist sympathizer. Such intolerance may ultimately prove harmful to the cause of democracy and peace.

The opinions I have cited—those pointing out the attractions of communism as well as those condemning it—have come from people who are not communists. Many would resent being called even communist sympathizers. What alternatives do they have to a doctrine in which they recognize such alluring characteristics? I found that they have none. The more intelligent economics students deny the validity of Marxism, but their criticism is only negative. They do not accept capitalism, or "free enterprise." They condemn Russia for denying freedom to the people, but they are skeptical about the extent of freedom and equality in America, which is presented to them as a country of democracy, but where they see a definite socialistic trend. They are in search of a new ideology into which they can pour their enthusiasm. An ideology, it has been said, consists of three elements: a philosophy, or systematized *theory;* a *program of action;* a fervor, or *passion.* Thus communism is indeed an ideology; nazism and fascism were also, and Japan's extreme nationalism before and during the war may well deserve the name. It is obvious that if we are seeking an alternative to communism, or to any "ism" that can exert such magnetic attraction, we must find a belief more powerful than its competitors. Christianity and democracy are often called the ideologies of the West. Does either have the force or the program to capture the young people of Japan? If neither is accepted enthusiastically, why not?

The fact has to be acknowledged that in Japan Christianity is as yet only a feeble and negligible force, although superficially the facts might seem to indicate otherwise. It is true that there is widespread interest in Christianity: the Bible is read widely by both Christians and non-Christians, and famous Christian leaders, such as John R. Mott, E. Stanley Jones, Tracy Strong, and Emil Brunner, always attract large audiences. But the interest does not last long. In fact, it is safe to say that the number of Christians in the Japanese popula-

tion is only slightly greater today than it was 300 years ago, when the Jesuits had made about 300,000 converts, and the ratio of Christians to the total population is undoubtedly less. Christianity has been moderately successful in social work, but it is not a "force" in politics or economics. It is not a harsh criticism to say that Christianity is not taking root in Japan. Why does it fail to arouse enthusiasm among the people? It is not because Christianity does not have a sound philosophy. The social theory, or the Gospel of the Kingdom, as propounded by Jesus, is as thoroughgoing and revolutionary as any doctrine ever pronounced by radical social reformers. What is lacking is a program of action to convert that theory into reality, and the passion to plan and execute such a program.

Nevertheless, it is my belief that what I might call "dynamic Christianity" is *potentially* the answer to the urgent need of the present. By "dynamic Christianity" I mean both the individual and the social gospel and a world view compatible with the discoveries of all the sciences and with the demands of both reason and conscience. Christianity has already exerted a pervasive ethical influence among thoughtful Japanese, and since the war it has been widely recognized that democracy springs in great part from Christian principles. But thus far neither a prophet nor an organization has started a Christian-social crusade capable of inspiring youth as a whole with a faith and a fervor such as Communism has aroused.

Democracy likewise cannot play the commanding role in Japan that it does in the United States. It is no doubt premature to speak of the failure of democracy in Japan, since it was only five years ago that Japan surrendered, and the attempt at democratization has been made under military occupation. No one will deny that much has already been done to make politics, economics, and education more democratic: a new constitution has been adopted; the *Zaibatsu* have been broken up; the school organization has been revised and a new educational program adopted. But despite this tremendous effort and achievement, the spread of war and revolution through China and into Korea leads one to wonder if democracy has done nearly enough to cope with the powerful ideology that is engulfing Asia.

In the last two World Wars the American people accepted as an ideal the defense of democracy, in something of a crusading spirit. This did not seem strange to Americans, but to Japanese youth this was almost as fantastic and baffling as their joining suicide corps and dying for their Tenno seemed to Americans. What causes this difference? Why did the Japanese respond to Tenno with such eagerness,

and why do they not share the American enthusiasm for democracy?

The answer to this question is at the heart of Japan's dilemma. Essentially, it is that the youth of Japan and of America come from two different backgrounds formed by vastly dissimilar cultural patterns. Present-day Japan is the result of at least 700 years of feudalism, the basis of which was loyalty to a lord, and the people have not completely emerged from it. America, on the other hand, has never known feudalism. Europe, the parent of America, did of course have its feudal period, but America did not. In other words, the measurements of social values in America and Japan are not at all the same.

To understand the reason for these differences in social values and to grasp the meaning of the different behavior of peoples under different cultural patterns, we have to remember this central fact: the test of whether a certain social institution is generally regarded as good or bad is not whether it was so inscribed in a sacred book, because social values do change according to time and environment. Slavery, for example, is condemned today as evil in all countries, but it found social sanction for long ages. Socrates did not condemn it. It was widely accepted as long as it possessed social utility. The same standard applies to the institution of feudalism, or to polygamy or polyandry.

What, then, is the test of social validity, and what brings about change in the value attached to institutions and customs? This test, I believe, is composed of these three questions: (1) Is the institution in question conducive to *social order?* (2) Is it conducive to *prosperity?* (3) Is it conducive to the *contentment* of the people? These are only rough tests, but apply them to the institutions of slavery, polyandry, feudalism, democracy, or even war, if you choose, and you will have a key to understanding varying standards of social validity.

Thus, strange as it may seem to the people of the United States, which has never had a period of feudalism and where the word "feudal" often has an unfavorable connotation, feudalism in Japan was a respectable institution. Its functions were to maintain order, assure prosperity, and give contentment to the people, and it succeeded in fulfilling those functions. In other words, it met the three tests given above. It was the source of authority and dignity, and as long as these attributes of the feudal society remained, the loyalty of the people was directed spontaneously to the maintenance of the feudalistic social order. The traditional commitments of the people are still binding because the philosophy in which Japan has been steeped for more than seven centuries still survives. This philosophy

derives from Shintoism, the indigenous religion, and Confucianism and Buddhism, which were brought over from the Asiatic mainland. Feudalism flourished because the philosophy underlying it proved satisfactory and beneficial.

The behavior of the Japanese today is accordingly shaped by these ideas, even though many of them are no longer held to be sound. Americans, and indeed the entire West, can never understand those ideas and actions of the Japanese that seem undemocratic and archaic unless they fully understand feudalism. Officially, Japan has discarded feudalism; actually, its people have not.

The West was aided in throwing off feudalism by that long period of regeneration known as the Renaissance, but Japan knew no such period. The West also underwent the Religious Reformation and the Industrial Revolution. The Revolutionary War in America, with its Declaration of Independence, and the French Revolution were not isolated incidents. They were, in fact, the culmination of centuries of struggle, experiment, and evolution, which increasingly ensured the basic human rights and laid the bases of equality and liberty without which modern Western democracy could not have come into being. But during this period Japan was separated from these great world events and developed instead a complete pattern of feudalism. Only after the defeat of the Empire in the Second World War was a serious attempt made to install the type of democracy that has developed in the West. Japan did try once to institute something approaching political democracy, in the restoration of Meiji in 1868, but in reality this was a return to the Emperor's government rather than to the people's, and whether it was a government by and for the people is doubtful. At least, there was no such intention on the part of the draftsmen of the Constitution, and economic and social democracy never occurred to them.

We can see, then, that the danger for Japan lies in the fact that her people, long steeped in the traditions of authoritarian feudalism, and lacking the heritage of Greek, Roman, and Hebrew-Christian culture and the Renaissance and the Reformation, cannot understand democracy, much less practice it. Democracy is the most demanding of social and political ideals, and since no nation has thoroughly achieved it, it would be a miracle if the Japanese people should attain even a fair degree in a few years. In the light of these historical truths, one can easily understand why many Japanese young people still find irresistible appeal in the authority of a totalitarian state, in which the value of the individual is nil and his dignity and freedom may be

completely ignored. Should another Tojo or Hitler or a communist counterpart appear on the scene, there is no telling what might happen, because the Japanese people are still, as their heritage has made them, hero worshippers and take pride in this fact. Democracy has not yet been made attractive enough to counteract the authority of a leader with a definite and challenging program.

THOMAS G. MASARYK

František Schwarzenberg

RECENT political developments in Czechoslovakia, especially as they affect the relations between church and state, invite us to review the current opinions on Thomas G. Masaryk. Some of those who during the last year have contributed to the commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of this man have not sufficiently stressed, it seems to me, the importance of spiritual and religious considerations in Masaryk's political thought. Superficial observers who consider the dismemberment of the Danubian monarchy the main achievement of Masaryk's life are often inclined to recognize in Masaryk the revolutionary only; and others, in less good faith, even to connect his name with the Soviet-sponsored triumph recently achieved in Czechoslovakia by the "people's democracy." It would certainly be futile to try to guess what Masaryk's attitude would have been towards these events had he lived; still less to attempt to whitewash, from a conservative viewpoint, a man who was proud of being a revolutionary. But it may be in order to recall briefly the place which Masaryk assigned to spiritual and religious values in the political sphere.

It has to be borne in mind that when Masaryk was elected the first President of Czechoslovakia, his nation stood at the crossroads as regards its political, and indeed, its entire cultural development. The American reader may find it difficult to imagine how radical was the change which the events of 1918 brought to the entire ideological structure of Central Europe. The national, social and economic results of the dismemberment of a great Continental power into a number of national states—none of them strong enough individually, as we know today, to resist Nazi and Soviet imperialism—are not under discussion here. What concerns us, if we seek to understand Masaryk's evaluation of the spiritual element in politics, is the situation which he faced when he was placed at the helm of a newborn democracy which accepted the basic achievements of the French Revolution, while on the other hand it clung to the institutional and legislative legacy of the past. The Czech revolution of 1918 was altogether unlike

the French and Russian revolutions; it was, perhaps, hardly a revolution in the common sense of the term. In those revolutions, which have come to be considered almost classical, much of the legislative structure and many ancient institutions were swept away, along with whole classes of society. Especially in regard to Russia it may well be argued that the new regime started from scratch; subsequent concessions to tradition were made for reasons of expediency only.

In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, no violent measures were taken against any social class. And by one of the first legislative acts of the new regime the validity of the existing legal system was reaffirmed in its entirety. Nevertheless, the events that immediately followed World War I mark a turning point in the official philosophy of the nation.

While in America a definite political philosophy existed even before the institutions of the Union took shape, the Bohemian or Czech state had existed for a thousand years, in which its existence was reaffirmed through the changing periods of history. During that time the institutions of the Czech state developed, from the glory of a medieval kingdom to the subordinate role of a virtual province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Yet, along with the remnants of the structure characteristic of the state, half submerged in a greater commonwealth, the deep-rooted, traditional consciousness of Czech statehood remained alive. It was not a new legislative and institutional system, rationally developed from a democratic philosophy of state, that was created after the fall of the Danubian monarchy. Rather, the democratic ideology was grafted upon the traditional social structure and the existing complex of laws and institutions that continued unchallenged. The important change, therefore, did not take place in the realm of laws and institutions, but in that of the theories regarding the origins of power, which were to give the ultimate sanction of legitimacy to the legislative and executive powers assumed by the new regime.

Until the downfall of the *ancien régime* in 1918, there survived in Central Europe the political conviction, once general on the Continent, that all legitimate power, as opposed to usurped power, originates with God. As a consequence of this belief, the temporal ruler was considered subject to the unchangeable laws revealed to man by God. If the ruler's political acts were not in line with this absolute, because divine, order, his subjects were released from their oath of allegiance. The traditional legislative complex had originated in ideas such as these. But the fundamental provision of the new Constitution, according to which all power in the state comes from the

people, had removed the cornerstone of the old building and replaced it with a new one hitherto unknown in Central Europe. The will of the people was to replace divine revelation as the ultimate criterion. Masaryk's peculiar contribution, it seems to me, lies in the fact that, despite the prevailing revolutionary trend of ideas, he sought to apply his concept of the authority of God. The new political philosophy which had been incorporated in the Constitution recognized the people as the sole source of all power; Masaryk, however, wanted to see the exercise of this power tested, supported, and confirmed by a standard independent of the will of the majority. In his attempt to provide this synthesis some of his definitions come surprisingly close to the ideas of the past. In these endeavors he was influenced by his philosophical convictions, but also by his own political insight. When he came to power it was apparent to him that neither the rise of nationalism nor the new democratic and social trends had, in his own country, invalidated the essentially religious approach to political problems; religious considerations, moreover, continued to play their part in the social and political relationships throughout Europe.

Masaryk was fully aware of this situation. He sought and found a new type of democratic philosophy, and in his own person he sought to embody a new type of democratic ruler which would be suitable to the ideological background and the social and political structure of his country. Masaryk did not consider the constitutional powers bestowed upon him by the people as sufficient sanction for his authority. The presidency, to him, constituted an ethical and philosophical mission, and he considered the adequate fulfillment of his mission the ultimate test of his qualification for the highest office. Though not anointed and not reigning by the grace of God, Masaryk sought to find for modern society a spiritual source of authority able to reinforce the temporal one. Masaryk's attempt to establish democracy in his own country is generally held to have been highly successful. It is all the more interesting to see how closely his convictions approximated the belief of George Washington that "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

We need not go through Masaryk's numerous volumes, nor his many speeches, in order to find the evidence for the convictions that underlie his political thought. A quick glance at Karel Čapek's book,[1] which Masaryk himself recognized as the authentic and definitive

[1] The quotations are taken from *Masaryk on Thought and Life, Conversations with Karel Čapek*. Translated from the Czech by M. and R. Weatherall (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1938).

condensation of his thought, will suffice. As I have mentioned above, the achievements of the French Revolution were embodied in the Czechoslovak state of 1918. The following passage sheds some light on the way in which Masaryk viewed these achievements:

> The existence of the soul is the real basis of democracy: the eternal to the eternal cannot be indifferent, one immortal is in equality with another immortal.

And again:

> I know that men are not equal; nowhere on the earth or in Nature is there equality—there is variety; only as immortal souls are we really equivalent. Liberté, égalité, fraternité—even the French Revolution de facto accepted Jesus' commandment, the commandment of love towards one's neighbour. It sounds like a paradox, but it is true: the French revolutionaries were theocrats, even if they had God merely as a Highest Being.

This is a point which Masaryk stressed time and again. When Čapek asked him what he considered the strongest argument for democracy, Masaryk answered:

> The strongest argument for democracy—faith in man, in his spirit and immortal soul; that is true, metaphysical equality. Ethically democracy is based on the political realization of love of one's neighbour.

And when Čapek, a liberal who certainly did not share all of Masaryk's religious convictions, pressed him further by asking him bluntly, "Then in the end you see the true foundation of democracy in religion; if I may say so, you are really a theocrat," Masaryk gave the unequivocal answer:

> I am not frightened of words, and I have nothing against that expression if you take theocracy literally as the rule of God. I conceive the state, national life, politics, like the whole of life, in truth sub specie aeternitatis. True democracy founded on love and respect for one's neighbour, and towards all neighbours, is the realization of the rule of God on earth.

Masaryk, who did not confuse politics and ethics, had a clear perception of their relative value, as the following passage shows:

> Not even the best parliament exists to vote for what is truth, right, and morality; you cannot take a majority vote about truth, the fundamental principles of politics, about right and morality.

That to Masaryk this conviction must have subordinated majority opinion to the demands of higher principles is clear from the following:

> Well, I can't help it; I imagine law and the state as being built upon moral foundations, and in that respect also on religious ones.

While Masaryk thus denied the right to set aside the binding imperative of God's commandments, he also was convinced of the continued presence of the Divine Providence in the affairs of men. When his astonished interlocutor stated that Masaryk came close to believing in Providence, the President answered:

> Of course. I do believe, I must believe in Providence which governs the development of the world, and of humanity, and of any one of us. Once I acknowledge God the creator, and director, I must see in everything some order, plan, and reasonable aim.

One cannot help pondering—in the light of Czechoslovakia's present ordeal—these views of Masaryk's concerning the proper relationship between the divine and the human order. They are the same as the view that is implied in those words of Masaryk's which have since become a watchword among all Czech democrats: "Jesus, not Caesar."

WE ARE GOD'S UTOPIA

Stefan Andres

The monotonous brown plain lay pulverized under the ever returning sun. Such a thick cloud of dust had formed around the vehicle which vanished into the gentle undulations of the road and then again struggled uphill that only by its speed, the stench of its gasoline, and the long afternoon shadow it cast could one recognize a heavy truck. Anyone seeing the vehicle as it sped along in the desert might have had the grotesque illusion that a piece of the road had risen up and set out on a tour of its own in order to follow for itself the intriguing line of its ups and downs and of all its meanderings; it swirled along in a plume of golden dust, trailing behind it a long, ever thinner, ever lower fluttering veil.

But there was no onlooker. The few dead farmhouses stared with black windows into the blazing sun. Only a few dogs raised their noses to the approaching monster of dust and noise; they crouched low and ran into the scorched fields, only to return again to search along the edges of the empty road, to sniff about an overturned baggage truck and at the bloated body of a dead horse. Hesitant, they quarreled among themselves, until hunger overcame their aversion to the carcass.

The cloud of dust, meanwhile, crept steadily into the distance where, on the golden brown heights, the equally brown circular wall of a town, a still surviving relic of the Middle Ages, rose up like a natural rocky cliff. There it vanished under the arched gate like a locomotive into a tunnel. The soldiers guarding the gate saw how, on the cobblestones, the dust surrounding the truck suddenly vanished. Bayonets gleamed forth like a stockade around the claylike figures who squatted on the truck's open platform and stared dull-faced into the unexpected shade, scarcely raising their heads for a furtive, fleeting glance about them.

Although the truck encountered no one, neither civilian nor soldier, it rolled slowly along the narrow, gloomy ravine of the street. It swung about on the broad, glaring plaza; there, in the shade before the steps of the Carmelite monastery's baroque façade—joyless in its bristling pomp—the heavy vehicle finally came to a halt.

At the sound of its rude honk, an officer appeared under the portal, accompanied by a sergeant and a soldier. They received the new arrivals with looks of gloomy indifference. The six with the bayonets jumped instantly to the pavement. A command was shouted and the prisoners stood up painfully, shuffled about a bit and, first letting down their numb feet as far as possible, jumped carefully onto the pavement.

There were over twenty prisoners who were to be quartered in the monastery. The building's spaciousness and its barred windows made it especially appropriate for its new purpose. Moreover, it stood with its back to the town wall so that there was a precipitous drop of over twenty feet from the second-story windows. This was still more advantageous to those in charge since the place, which could accommodate something over two hundred prisoners, could thus get along with very few guards. They consisted, in fact, of only a lieutenant, a sergeant, and two soldiers. There were a few antiaircraft batteries in the town, as well as some motorized units which were awaiting front-line duty.

Before the truck which had brought the prisoners left again, a little incident occurred which the young lieutenant observed attentively from his position on the steps. He saw how one of the prisoners remained standing on the truck, pressed his right hand to his forehead and, his head thrust back on his shoulders, stared at the monastery. Then one of the soldiers lifted his rifle and, with its butt, gave the standing man a blow in the hollow of the knees so that his tall figure fell to a kneeling position which somehow appeared strangely appropriate. Then, as the soldiers laughed, the tall man jumped down in front of them with an unexpectedly nimble leap, looked quizzically and proudly, but not in the least angrily, at each in turn and joined the group. The soldiers with the bayonets accompanied the prisoners into the monastery. Here they had to wait for a while, standing in the shadow of the cloisters.

The lieutenant took the roll call with the aid of a list held out for him by one of the bayonet-carrying soldiers of the prisoners' escort. He had the soldier tell him the ages and branches of the service of the prisoners since they had, for the most part, turned over their field jackets to the victors or else intentionally left them behind somewhere

because of the heat. Now as the soldier read, "Paco Hernandes, 53, Marine Infantry," the lieutenant looked around questioningly; after briefly peering about, the soldier with the list indicated a man who was going slowly toward the draw well in the garden at the center of the cloister. The lieutenant noticed immediately that he was the same prisoner who had looked at the monastery so strangely and, against his will, had fallen to his knees.

The other prisoners, sleepy and dead tired, stood leaning against the walls of the arcade. One could hear the slow step of the man in the garden where the path was strewn with gravel. On the surrounding columns metallic blue morning glories and Virginia creeper climbed up to the corridor windows of the second floor; the honeyed fragrance of the wisteria hung heavy and sweet within the square of the white walls. Under the arcade it smelled of lime and mold, and of the newly arrived men, sticky with dust and sweat, some of whom, sitting on the stone floor and leaning against the wall, were already asleep.

But now the step of the man in the little garden had reached the well which, built of gray stone, seemed to grow like a flower cup out of the ivy. On the rounded curb of the well the four iron poles which supported the pulley for the drawbucket bent toward each other to form wrought-iron wings which rose up on the rods as though two kneeling angels, of whose shapes only the wings were visible, were bowing over the well.

The man now lifted the iron lid and looked into the well. His movements, so it seemed to the lieutenant, had something of the blind impulse of suicide and, fearing for the irreplaceable spring water, he leaped at the unsuspecting prisoner and challenged him.

"Looking for something in the well, by any chance?"

Thus sharply questioned, the man raised his big face out of the depths and looked at the lieutenant; he did this, however, in such a calm, unstartled fashion that it roused the young officer's anger.

"Oh—me?" said the man and smiled. "I wanted to look into the well. Don't you ever do that, Teniente Don Juan?"

The lieutenant stared at the heat-swollen, smiling lips; his anger was gone and he only said wonderingly, "Juan? That's not my name at all."

"No? Oh, that's right. Pardon me. That was my lieutenant's name. He's dead now—that's right."

The young officer, without himself knowing how he happened to do so, gave his name: his name was Pedro, Pedro Gutierrez.

"Oh, it is," the other nodded. "My name is Paco."

"And you really only wanted to look into the well?"

"Yes, don't you ever do that?"

The tall Paco now looked down questioningly and with equal astonishment at the rather short lieutenant who in turn, shaking his head briefly, looked searchingly at the prisoner.

Paco Hernandes' head was a large, brown oval. When he smiled, deep, long lines stretched from his mouth straight to his eyes. The sweeping oval was repeated in the eyes; they were highly arched, brown and gentle—or perhaps simply unconcerned and weary. His nose was of more than average length and finely shaped; Lieutenant Pedro was suddenly reminded of a particular wooden head in his long-since-destroyed puppet theater to which he frequently gave the role of Harlequin but also just as often that of the hero. These reflections made him pull back his thick lips in a quick, thoughtful smile.

"Are you thirsty?" he asked.

"Practically always. Now even for water; but just the same one can look into a well without being thirsty. Or don't you think so, Teniente Don Pedro?"

The lieutenant opened the iron lid once and clapped it down again; in doing so he glanced toward the ground and simultaneously at the prisoner's shoes, which were practically in shreds.

"But tell me, why did you actually—just a while ago," he began, and then, drawing his bushy eyebrows together and staring at Paco, "—why did you put on such a show?"

"So kind of you, Teniente Don Juan—or that is, Don Pedro—I have such a hard time getting used to new names—and places—you know—and besides—"

Paco's face suddenly became thoughtful: he was apparently trying to make up his mind whether to go on or not; then, encompassing the cloister with a single glance, he nodded as though he had reached a decision.

"Actually this place isn't new to me and it really was a bit of a show when I made such a face before this building. So I have a little request—" He glanced toward the stone steps which led upwards. "—a big one even: that you give me my old cell again!"

As Paco saw how the lieutenant stared at him, he nodded soothingly.

"Yes, but it's almost twenty years now since I got out of here—but just the same, the cell—you understand, Don Pedro—a dog gets used to his old kennel, doesn't he?"

As he spoke thus in a joking tone, at the corners of his eyes there appeared little wrinkles which twitched with eagerness and gave a certain slyness to his expression.

"Are you a priest?" Lieutenant Pedro asked softly, almost confi-

dentially, his voice taking on a hoarse overtone.

Paco drew his face back a little and looked at the young officer searchingly.

"Why do you ask that question?" Now, however, the wrinkles in his haggard cheeks became alive again. "You ask that so solemnly. I, if you must know, am actually a sailor by profession, first class seaman on a freighter! What I am at the moment, you can see. Bad luck, isn't it? The war simply swept me overboard, and not only that, it carried me here—as though it had reason, the war—or a sense of humor! And so I thought it would cap the climax to lock me up in my old cell. Or are the prisoners put up somewhere else—in the refectory, the library, the cellar?"

Lieutenant Pedro Gutierrez shook his head.

"In the cells, of course! But are you really a priest? My question has an entirely personal basis."

He tugged nervously at his little mustache, staring hard at Paco who straightened his somewhat drooping shoulders and nodded:

"But excommunicated, of course!"

Lieutenant Pedro now let go of his mustache with a quick jerky pull and, already half turning to go, exclaimed, "Good God! That's more or less true of all of us!" And turning back to Paco once more, he said softly, "Come."

Since, for reasons of security, the prisoners were housed only on the second floor and since, along the four corridors, there were only about forty cells available, most of the men had to share their cells with several others. Consequently, Lieutenant Pedro felt that he was being particularly magnanimous when he had the cell cleared out for Paco. It was the cell which Paco, smiling and shaking his head, striding over the red tiles, and then suddenly standing still, had pointed out to the lieutenant with outstretched hand: "Here—it was here—here lived Padré Consalves!"

The other prisoners had already vanished into their cells with scarcely a sound. The sergeant assigned them their places. At the foot of the stairs the two soldiers stood in the vicinity of machine guns which, like sleeping insects, stretched their long snouts rigidly and horizontally into the broad corridors.

Paco went up to the picture at the right of the door, a yellowed etching in Lorenzo Tiepolo's fine, feathery style.

"Even the same saint still—you see: Saint Francis Borgia, Confessor. You know he was viceroy of Spain and became a Jesuit, wanted to improve himself, just like me, only in reverse; that is to say, I'll never make it to viceroy, but then I was no Jesuit either, but—" Paco

glanced up and down the empty vaulted corridor. "A place like this has something about it, hasn't it? Indestructible, the aura of these walls—and at the same time, many things have happened here, haven't they?"

Paco had been cheerfully talking to himself, but with these last words he turned, as though he were suddenly startled, toward the young officer who only grinned and nodded:

"All sorts of things! Good that you took off twenty years ago—really lucky—in fact, lucky for both of us!"

They were already standing in the cell when Don Pedro said that. Paco looked at him over his shoulder, listening with sudden attention although he pretended to be merely looking at the cell door. Then he really did look there and, as he did so, he raised his slender eyebrows still higher so that his balding brow wrinkled, and trembling furrows rose on it like fine ripples which seemed to be about to glide backwards over his skull. In his eyes there was a sudden horror: in the brown chestnut wood of the door were some little holes where splinters had been torn loose; he was tempted to look for the pieces on the sandstone floor.

Now, as Paco gazed very seriously into his eyes, Lieutenant Pedro nodded, looked past him, and went up to the lectern and put his hand on it. He shook the piece of furniture a bit and then, as though something had occurred to him, pulled out his handkerchief and dried off his sweat.

"It's frightfully hot in these monks' cells." Then he shrugged his shoulders. "They sat like moles in their burrows. They wouldn't come out, so we shot in; there didn't seem to be anything else to do." He cleared his throat.

"Why not? Since they didn't shoot, they could have been left alone!"

"While we planted a company of soldiers around the monastery for four weeks to keep them from continuing to stir up the people against us. Is that, perhaps, what is done on your side? We have neither enough soldiers, time, inclination, nor desire for that sort of thing. Incidentally, we found hand grenades buried in the cellar. That wasn't exactly friendly of the monks, was it? Since they didn't come out of the building at our request, we had to go in."

The speaker now tried to bestir his heavy face into a smile, but he didn't succeed.

"A grotesque order which I, of all people, had to carry out. And here in this cell—now what was the good padré's name?" The lieutenant went to the door and twisted himself around to have a look

at the nameplate on the upper part of the door frame. "Ah, that's right: Padré Julio. His father is a well-known man, and there was the prospect of a bishopric for Padré Julio, I was told. Everybody in the town was talking about him—it's less than two weeks ago! The other monks at least opened the doors themselves; some with a presentiment had them already standing open; one even came out to meet me. Whew, that one! Still others, when my men knocked with their revolver butts, solemnly called out, *'Salve'*—".

"Right, that's the greeting here when someone knocks," Paco nodded and smiled to himself.

The lieutenant went on: "Quite impressive, to bid death enter with a *Salve*. That fine Padré Julio, however, had firmly fastened the door with a wire and called in a high, shrill voice, *'Un momento, un momento*—but I'm not dressed.' It was rather early but then he actually was fully dressed when we went to see if there was still any life in him. He lay there," the speaker pointed with a vague motion toward the tiles which were all the same brownish red, "yes, there he lay on his face, dressed in his white robe. When we turned him over we found scarcely a drop of blood on his brown cowl; he actually lived for a moment. Looking up at us reprovingly, he said, loudly and distinctly, 'One does not visit anyone at such an early hour—not even to kill him!' Then he showed his fine teeth and was dead."

Paco had been staring at the thick lips of the narrator as though he were deaf and had to read the words there. When the lieutenant stopped speaking, he started, pressed his thumbs against his chest and with the rest of his hand made a few flicking movements.

"Teniente Don Pedro, I am, if you will permit my saying so, thirsty, very thirsty, and if I might have a cigarette—"

Lieutenant Pedro held out his cigarette case and gave him a light, asking as he did so:

"Did you by any chance know the dead man?"

Paco nodded.

At that the lieutenant abruptly went off, saying he would see to it himself and would manage to find a little refreshment. Paco gazed through the door after him, gazed through the holes in the door and shook his head uncomprehendingly.

He bent down as though he were looking for something on the tiles, bent lower and lower and finally knelt down and kissed the floor; he lay thus, motionless, his hands over his face, for quite some time. Padré Julio—discalced Carmelite and count, wit and fool—and friend! In so far as that is possible within the brotherhood, friend of the restless Paco, of Padré Consalves—confidant, at least; no, really friend!

And here, then, in the cell of the runaway Consalves, he had met his end. And Paco had to return to find this out.

Bent over thus to the ground, he suddenly started like one who had forgotten something. He jumped up, went to the window and opened it, and his fingers felt along the outer side of the bars above and below where the stone held them. The deep notches in every bar gave him a feeling like a rousing electrical shock; finally he drew a deep breath and shivered as the stream of air entered into him: this very night! He felt the excitement tingling between his shoulder blades; he hissed once with pleasure, then he stood very still and stared again at the tiles.

Yes, it was Padré Julio who had earnestly advised Paco, since he was disturbed by the bars—hadn't one become a monk of one's own free will!—to file them to the point where they would just barely hold; then the grating would be nothing more than a décor and, at the same time, a "symbol of voluntary imprisonment"!

They were both about to receive Holy Orders, and even then Julio was still considering withdrawing even though he had already taken solemn vows. He had entered the order because of definite moral coercion on the part of his parents. There, on account of the rich dower and the great name, every imaginable freedom was secretly permitted him. Yet in the end it was the zealot and penitent, Consalves, who left two years after their ordination; Padré Julio, on the other hand, who just then was away on a visit to his parents—Padré Julio, the aesthete and undecided weakling, had stayed on in the order, and he had so died that his murderers told with a sort of pleasure about his death.

Now Paco was to be indebted for his escape to the crazy advice of Padré Julio. The grating was now indeed only a décor: tonight he would break it out and—Paco drew his brows together—the window was, to be sure, high up in the wall, probably more than thirty feet. He looked around the cell searchingly: the straw sack, of course—that one knew from the innumerable stories of sailors' escapes! Only the ticking was very thick and one needed a knife. And even that: Paco caught sight of a piece of wire sticking out from under the curtain of the clothes closet. It was a thick zinc wire about fifteen feet long, very probably the one with which Julio had fastened his cell door. He looked at the twisted wire ring which had evidently been carelessly rolled up; he let the curtain fall over it again immediately, however, and felt the material that certainly came from Padré Julio's parents, from the castle: there was no brocade in the other cells. Poor Julio, you were always so ready to help, so resourceful—actually even

now—where can they have buried him?—yes, you help even now!

Fundamentally, Julio was the most inept person imaginable. He couldn't defend himself against anyone: not against his parents who imprisoned him here, and not against his murderers who wanted to get him out. Instead he now helps me to get out. The creases in Paco's cheeks were like two gaping wounds that wouldn't heal, for his smile never let them rest.

He drew a deep breath and went to the lectern over which St. John of the Cross gazed out of an old engraving. He brought his face close up to the eyes of the saint, then sighing, shook his head; why do they gaze so sorrowfully upon the world from out their halo? Well, the father of the order had had to look from out his picture and see how his son, Padré Julio, stood facing the door and calling *"un momento."* But he also saw Padré Julio smiling dreamily to himself and writing Latin verses to his young lady cousins and to former school friends. That very thing must have made the austere father of the order still more melancholy. Paco, with his impenetrable face, smiled at the saint. Oh yes, one could somewhat understand the expression of the saint, always seeking and yet never quite finding satisfaction. The saints, the lovers, and the utopian dreamers continued to transform the world into poetry, each in his own fashion, and all soon observed —at least most of them, the best of them—that, Paco winked sympathetically at the saint, that it is difficult to find a place for heavenly visions in this world. When the pictures of pure longing will not fit into any frame, when reality proves to be a blind and prolific growth which tolerates the saints, lovers, and dreamers only as though they were parasitic plant lice, that makes for melancholy.

But how sad the world would be without the sadness of unquenchable longing! He experienced that in himself whenever he wanted to become practical and reasonable and when he sought only what physical comfort demanded. It was as though someone decided, on seeing some playful fishes, to become one of them: he dives down—but soon he finds that in order to live under the water one has to have certain organs and be without certain others. So it turns out to be much better after all to have melancholy impede one's breathing up above than to stifle in sadness down below.

Formerly, during the Middle Ages, there were eight deadly sins: the eighth was sadness. Paco rubbed the bristling stubble on his chin and walked slowly back and forth in the cell: but then the theologians no longer had any more idea what to do about that than the people knew what to do about melancholy. I, for my part, thought Paco, I walk here on the same tiles on which Padré Julio died; once again I

should like to be practical, reasonable; I think over the possibilities of getting away and have a thoroughly ticklish, divided feeling about it. In my cell, in the room in which he died; why, actually, this haste to get away from here? Because the grating is filed, has been for the last twenty years; or because it's the nature of this cell to want to be rid of me perhaps?

He rubbed his shoulders against the wall; a feeling of well-being, and also the flea bites—of which, however, he was not aware—made him engage in this activity. And thus, starting up out of deep meditation, he called *"Salve":* someone had knocked. Yes, he had become a thorough monk once more, and the cell had apparently again received him favorably.

Lieutenant Pedro set down a tray on the desk. There was everything he needed: wine, water, bread, cheese—and even a knife! The knife, in its unhoped-for appearance, had a magic power. It was a kitchen knife, solid and with a sharp point. Paco blushed and Lieutenant Pedro thought it was out of gratitude—certainly that too!—for everything, but very specially for the knife. If he leaves it here, Paco thought— He had to force his gaze away so that the other wouldn't notice anything. If he leaves it here, then one's really a good bit further along. Such a knife is—and he took hold of it to cut himself a piece of cheese—is really strength in one's hand. He turned to the lieutenant, who was sitting on the bunk and staring straight in front of him, his head in his hands. Paco began to thank him; stammered something about chivalry and "too great kindness," while the figure on the bunk made a deprecatory movement with his shoulders.

"Not at all, Padré Consalves. But tell me—was he a friend of yours? How extraordinary it is, isn't it, that you sit here eating where he—Lord! It's like a puppet show! One is dragged off—"

Paco interrupted him with the question as to where the body was buried.

"In the cemetery, of course. What do you take us for, Padré Consalves?"

Paco raised his hand.

"Not Padré, please. One doesn't like to be reminded of old names. I have drowned the Padré in wine at a thousand waterfront dives and prostituted him on brothel beds—to give you the exact picture."

"So much the better for me," whispered Lieutenant Pedro. For a moment it seemed to Paco that the somewhat bulging eyes in his bloated face shot forth sparks of lust, and he felt oppressed. Then he saw how the other clapped his hands to his face and sat there, all hunched over.

Paco went on eating. He had to wash down every bite with wine. He didn't know why, but the proximity of this person depressed him. "Why on earth don't you sit down?" Lieutenant Pedro asked abruptly.

"Oh, that's right." Paco sat down in the wicker chair. "Funny!" he muttered to himself.

"What's funny?"

"That a chair is standing here and I don't sit down."

Lieutenant Pedro shrugged his shoulders and again sank into his brooding.

"Would you believe it? I never sat in this chair before," Paco said. He himself was astonished about it, but astonished most of all because he had said so aloud.

Lieutenant Pedro looked up with a start. "What? Were you lying to me by any chance?"

"Why?"

"Are you really a priest?"

"But what has that got to do with it?" Paco, puzzled, shook his head. Finally, as he saw the connection, he said, "Oh, because I never sat on this chair?" He laughed: "There was another reason for that. At that time I secretly wanted to be an anchorite. For years I only knelt, stood, or lay down! A very nice exercise, but on the whole, I assure you, one big bluff. I was as proud of my penitential exercises as you are of your medal there. Oh well, one does want to make something of oneself after all—and at the same time—"

"Go on with what you started to say," the young officer urged.

"Oh, I mean—at the same time, our own efficiency thereafter blocks the way to the essential thing which awaits us."

"What do you mean by the essential thing?"

Lieutenant Pedro leaned forward and watched Paco curiously as he ate. He was just in the act of cutting a piece of cheese and, at these words, he gazed at the knife and shook his head.

"The essential thing—yes—" Paco threw the knife carelessly down onto the tray. "I found out that as far as I'm concerned it has usually consisted of the opposite of what I was striving for. Do you know that I wanted to reform the Carmelite order and the whole Spanish church?"

Paco asked that as though he had made an indecent joke in the form of a question.

"Good God! Well, it was certainly necessary and you were young!" Lieutenant Pedro said that in a light and offhand manner.

"It was necessary?" Paco smiled. "What is necessary always comes to pass, either with or without us. That's a consolation anyway, isn't

it? You, for example, Teniente Don Pedro, have carried out a very thorough reform here. No, please. Don't tell me any more about it for the time being."

He jerked his chair into a different position. He sat near the wall, and the setting sun threw the shadow of the bars onto the tiles so that the pattern of the grating now lay between the two men. Paco stretched out his hand:

"Is that where he lay?"

Lieutenant Pedro nodded. "Just about there. If it weren't that he was a friend of yours, I would say that the spot where a monk got laid low makes precious little difference to me. One is used to such performances—to such performances, oh yes, indeed!"

Paco held his head sideways as though he were listening to something.

"Used to? Listen. That's artillery, isn't it?" There was a dull, confused thundering in the distance. He went on without waiting for an answer: "Used to? Oh, I haven't even managed to get used to myself! You see, I'm still on my crate when I'm already in port and still in a steady bed on land when I'm already rollicking about on the deep again. That really isn't very healthy, is it? But one can't do anything about it—or can one?"

"I don't understand what you mean."

"Oh no, naturally not! But then you have a tough hide. I mean because you can accustom yourself to everything so quickly!"

"Oh, not to everything. Stop it. Not to everything!"

The woolly head of the speaker now hung down practically between his knees. In this position, and without raising his shoulders, he turned his face up toward Paco; he had to roll his eyes. Paco shuddered inwardly at this sudden grimace of suffering.

The Lieutenant whispered, positively hissed, "Would you hear my confession?"

Paco on hearing that, pressed so hard against the back of the chair that it groaned. A pause followed, which a mosquito filled with his metallic propeller-like humming. Once Paco struck out through the air trying to catch it, but his hand, when he opened it, was empty.

"Look here," he said in a very offhand manner, "I am a sailor."

"You should know," the lieutenant cut in hastily, "that I'm a lawyer; that is, I was still a student when the war broke out. But I still remember that; I actually remember it from my school days too: you remain a priest. You retain all your priestly powers!"

Paco stood up and went over to the window. It was wide open, but not a breath of air stirred the glowing heat of the cell. Out there like

dark gold lay the plain, sloping away gently and rising up again at the not far distant horizon. The few chestnut trees stood on the bare plain like mushrooms, still and abrupt; scraggy juniper bushes stretched up like black flames, and the trees cast carmine shadows against the walls of the town. The entire land and everything in it seemed to be made of bronze. The earth shook, vibrating like an enormous gong, as it received the impact of the cannons' thud, which was muffled by the distance and the dryness of the air. The sun now stood only a hand's breadth above the bare ridge of the hills; one could already look into it; then one saw suns everywhere in the dusky twilight of the cell—suns that began moving in a circle, melted into each other and finally dissolved.

"Certainly. Certainly." Paco's voice sounded as though he were soothing a child. "As an excommunicated priest I can, however, only give you absolution 'in articulo mortis' as the technical phrase goes. One really can't say that you are on the verge of death."

"God-damned theological rot!" The lieutenant jumped up. "If I didn't believe myself to be in danger of death, I'd take my time."

Paco looked up attentively, and at the same time sympathetically. "Danger of death. Well, there's the war!"

The lieutenant made a scornful gesture with his hand. "War! I don't mean that danger of death, although that would already be sufficient—for confession, I mean. But I'm not thinking of that at all. This is a different matter. Every morning when I wake up I have to mop the sweat off myself: a mess, I can tell you. I never knew such a feeling—until those damned nuns—"

His words came haltingly—shied, as it were, like horses at the sight of a piece of paper or some similar object—and then finally took the obstacle under the impulse of some foul oath which included an obscene reference to Mary's Immaculate Conception.

Paco shook his head. "You swear most unappetizingly; and that on account of a few nuns, Teniente Don Pedro?"

Thus reproved, the lieutenant breathed hard, then nodded, "I know I'm spoiling everything for myself—but then you don't know anything. At night when I go to sleep, I'm afraid of my dreams. Can you imagine that in a hard-boiled soldier like me?" He swore again, but this time he cursed the devil. "Maybe it's all just damned superstition—I don't mean confession, Padré, not at all, but these dreams, this fear—as though someone were lying in wait for me, someone the nuns have sent."

Now Paco asked, "Which nuns?" but he was thinking of something else.

The lieutenant turned away in horror at this and shook his head. "Later, Padré. It's frightful. In confession, yes!"

Paco was really thinking of something else; he was thinking: now if I act as though I wanted to cut myself another slice of cheese, the knife is very pointed and strong—it would go quickly and noiselessly—and with his revolver, then—I'd only have to unbolt a few cell doors—just in running by—and the few guards, if one came around the corner suddenly like that, they wouldn't exactly be lying at the machine guns ready to shoot—"

These were, in fact, not actual thoughts but the soldier's subconsciousness, the untiring professional instinct which makes the shoemaker who is out for a walk look, without realizing it, at other people's feet. Paco contorted his face as though he had a headache.

He said, "Your post is certainly not without danger!" That sounded almost like a warning; even Paco was surprised.

"Oh!" Lieutenant Pedro made a vulgar noise with his lips; he laughed through his nose. "You aren't implying that I'm afraid of the prisoners. As far as they're concerned—" But then he broke off, casting a sidelong glance up at Paco. His thick hand moved nervously to his little beard. "Oh, no," he lowered his head, "against them there are the machine guns, but the dreams, I tell you—" He suddenly threw his head back, "Try as you may you can't possibly picture to yourself what I've done. Not you: you are a child compared to me, even if you don't believe it. My sins visit me in my dreams—it's—O misericordia!"

He stamped his foot, and in the same manner turned away again as though in fear. Paco experienced a strange, undefined anger: why doesn't he drive me into a rage, this scoundrel? Now would be the right moment, but I'm not keyed up to it. He brought me something to eat and drink, and along with that, the knife. Why is he such a downright fool as to put a knife before a prisoner and then to sit around as though he were waiting for the blow! And besides all that, to have such foreboding dreams! Trust can become impudent. After all, I'm his enemy, even now; I have the right to use every possible means of escape, every one! Otherwise, why should the machine guns be standing aimed against us? All right, turn around; otherwise—Paco stared at the lieutenant with narrowed eyes. He hadn't thought all this out word for word, but all of it and still more was seething inarticulately within him; still he could not rouse himself to anger. That strong back in front of him was weighed down in too miserable a manner, and so he slowly placed his hand on Pedro's shoulder and said,

"As a matter of fact, I have more than enough sins of my own. So turn around. The sun has set. You don't have to be ashamed!"

"Oh, ashamed!" the lieutenant laughed coarsely.

"Certainly," Paco nodded. "One is ashamed if one coughs a grain of rice into a lady's face. Terrible isn't it? But when one kills off a few monks—"

"Nuns," whispered the other. "Nuns—and they come now; last night they were impertinent, I tell you; positively impertinent!"

"They have a right to be, after all," murmured Paco.

"No. Not like this." The lieutenant shouted that out, almost choking. "They are cruel, these women; crueler than I was! They finally died in the end—but I, I shoot myself a hundred times in the head and they stand around me laughing like fishwives; that's how they laugh, these damned clothes racks. And every time their laughter goads me to press the revolver to my temple, they laugh, oh yes!—as only the dead can laugh. Then the revolver always turns into something. This is actually what I dreamed last night: the revolver became a can opener, a flower—think of it!—a house key, or it breaks in two in the middle, or water comes out the front of it. Isn't that—And they laugh; have you ever heard the dead laugh?"

"Never! What's more, I have never heard that they do laugh. Do you, by the way, believe that confession is going to keep the dead from laughing?"

Paco leaned against the wall, rubbing his shoulder; his voice sounded not exactly derisive, but rather cool. He went on in the same manner:

"I don't even believe that the dead are cruel. It is you—you are cruel!"

"I'm a devil," croaked the shadowy figure.

He now looked very small, did Teniente Don Pedro. Paco gazed past him at the opposite wall, which wavered in the waning light.

"A devil? You are a human being; what's more, a believing human being. Yes, that's very odd, isn't it? People are believers and still they sin—and odder still, they sin and still keep on believing."

There was a knock on the door. With one jerk Lieutenant Pedro was a different person: two quick strides and he was gone. Paco heard the bolt outside being pushed to, and that sound jarred him out of his train of thought; "caught like a pig in a pigsty" passed through his mind. He glanced in sober search about the cell, stuck the knife in his pocket, and went to the window.

The heat had not yet noticeably diminished; in half an hour it would be completely dark, dark enough anyway to go across the bare

plain following the direction indicated by the distant roar of guns. Perhaps, too, he might still be able to turn off in some other direction. In two hours there would be the faint light of the waxing moon. It didn't matter much where he came out in the end: anything rather than to have to sit here like a pig behind the bolted door. If as a monk he had already filed through the grill which then really didn't mean anything; if he could run away from a brutal captain in order to preserve his freedom, then—under what were certainly no less ticklish circumstances—he simply had to be the same and dare it.

In the cell next to his, two voices were singing softly and monotonously; it was more the sort of humming people make when the melody is in the heart but the chest is too heavy and immovable to follow it. Paco listened. He scarcely knew his fellow prisoners. He had first come to the unit only a few days before with his lieutenant, Don Juan, and a fellow soldier who had, however, also been killed. They were cut off while they were making an advance yesterday evening. Still, they had been close together in that moment: they had fired and then they had not fired any longer; together they had been disarmed and led away; together they had suffered hunger and thirst throughout the night; together they climbed onto the truck, later to be imprisoned here together under the same roof. Paco nodded; on that account, one probably had to see to it that they all got out of here again together.

No, he really must not go off alone; that was simply out of the question.

He shook the grill in a sort of hopeless caress, the grill which would give way with the first strong shove. God knows it had now again become "a symbol of voluntary imprisonment"—even though not for long. He felt for the knife in his pocket, weighed it a while in his hand. The gleaming of the blade was still quite plainly visible; in the twilight it looked like a piece of ice, one that did not melt in his hand, which was sweating from excitement. Paco considered; he put the knife back in his pocket and listened at the door. He heard the firm, slow step of the sergeant patrolling up and down—and he knocked. The bolt whirred briefly and decisively; the door was opened a crack and the sergeant asked what he wanted. He did so not without a certain courteousness in his tone; he had noticed that his superior had given preferential treatment to this prisoner.

"Oh," with that Paco took up the tray, "there's still some bread and cheese and a little wine here. I've had enough, and if you—I don't know, but the tray disturbs me; I should like to have the desk free."

The sergeant's ration was not very large, to judge by his pleased

expression. He grasped the tray without a moment's hesitation and disappeared.

As the bolt whirred again, Paco again took the knife out of his pocket; he let his thumb slide testingly along the blade and then put it back again. Now it was his for sure!

He lay down for a moment on the bunk, and as he stared up at the ceiling he discovered a water stain. What? Was that still the same one of twenty years ago? Not very likely. Padré Julio wouldn't have put up with it for so long. But watermarks come through again no matter how often one plasters them over. Now it had even grown a bit. Paco sighed.

It really was the same map of the kingdom of his dreams: of his island of the eight Beatitudes and of the Dionysian vine; his Utopia in the broad, white sea of the whitewashed ceiling; the Hyperboreans of his sleeping place whom he visited every night before falling asleep and often even in his dreams. There he would ride about on a donkey and give all those sermons about the eight Beatitudes and the all-uniting Dionysos—sermons which in real life he was forbidden even to write down.

Actually, there was no need to preach these truths to the simple islanders or to use them as threats. Since all divine truths lie like seeds in the unspoiled soul, it was only a matter of arousing these good people and of weaving each soul more closely into the pattern of the divine. They were, for the most part, fishermen, small farmers, and craftsmen, who brought their products to the market and there exchanged them with each other. They knew nothing of money. The commonwealth fed and clothed the artists and scholars; they were cared for like honey-gathering bees. There was no murder, robbery, or fraud. From time to time the court had to deal with a petty thief, with a slanderer who, out of boredom, failed to hold his tongue, or with an adulterer. The culprits were not segregated from the rest of the community but they had to wear special clothing; at communal meetings they had to sit apart and be silent until someone interceded with the judge on their behalf. Then they were solemnly and publicly invested again with the garb of the citizen; the governor of the town kissed them in the name of the people and a joyous celebration followed.

There were, incidentally, still actual pagans on the island who worshipped the old gods. The Christians and the pagans might tease each other about what each didn't understand in the other. The Christian and pagan priests and scholars were not, however, permitted to defend in controversial fashion, either in public addresses or in their

publications, their respective differences in faith and ritual and in various points of ethics. It was realized that the fruits of inner and outer life were the same for Christians and pagans. When Paco arrived on the island, just as many pagans as Christians came running to the beach to greet him. After he had been in the Christian churches, he also went into the temple of Dionysos—especially on the sixth of January when the great miracle of the wine took place, and at the time of the harvest festival; in the spring he took part in the mysteries of Demeter. It was known that many Christians, even priests, had let themselves be initiated and inducted into the mysteries. This was possible because paganism moved reverently in that region which had, from the beginning, always remained forbidden to Christianity: that is, in the sphere where nature reposes sinlessly in the divine and where the divine appears tangibly in nature. Here, in the figures of the gods, the divine overcomes the apparent impossibility of manifestation and presents itself to the senses without revealing itself to reason in dogmatic forms.

The Christians on the island said, however, that they had Mary and the saints instead of the gods; that man had, after all, encountered the Trinity in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that all forms of human life and order could be reflected in the divine through this mystery and could, indeed, be derived from it and sanctified through it.

Thus pagans and Christians competed with each other in trying to arrive at a knowledge of God, although one group had received its images from creation, the other from the Book, the longing of the lonely heart, and the spirit of history. Since each kept a zealous watch over the other, it came about that the Christians had in their faith much that they had taken from the pagans; the pagans, on the other hand, had taken much from the Christians. Pagan thought, which moved horizontally, and the thinking of the Christians, which ascended vertically into infinity, crossed one another like threads on a loom, and the garment of God which they wove in this fashion had the pattern of yearning peace and humble goodness.

The crossing over to the island was so pleasant that Paco very frequently went there. He liked to go over almost every evening as he was lying on his bed, and he often went even without actually intending to do so. Finally his escape to the island on the ceiling became a flight which began to trouble his conscience.

In the end, he confessed his trips to Utopia to Padré Damiano, his old professor of dogma. The padré frowned—he was an unspeakably sober mystic! Raising up with his hand the face of Padré Consalves, who was kneeling in front of him in the cell, he said gruffly, "Change

your cell, or have your island painted over, or better still, don't go over there any more. Don't forget this: no one has ever yet been able to reform the world into a Utopia, no one, not even He Himself! If you keep in mind, Padré Consalves, that the whole world is a stock exchange" (Padré Damiano had previously been a well-known banker) "and when you see how low God's shares are and you buy them nevertheless, then perhaps you are secretly thinking to yourself: Let's see. One can never tell! I can tell you this: your speculation is wrong! No sooner have you bought than the market goes down again, down, down, and down; you are generally laughed at and looked upon as a fool. But you hold on to the stock—you keep it because you can no longer dispose of it for a decent price anyway. To throw it away, that would be possible, yes; but to sell it? As you already know, the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. Now, in order to create a market for your stock which has become worthless, you begin, secretly and quietly, to found a Utopia somewhere. No one has seen it, but you talk about it; oh yes, all the things that Christianity can do. The result: a financial crash! The people find out that there is no such thing at all as this Utopia, as these redeemed and peaceful Christians, these detached priests concerned only with the eternal; indeed, that there is no such thing as this special life that loves the earth as only the pagans can and at the same time renounces it as it is the duty of the Christians to do. No, this special life does not exist. The Christians are no different from other men, and when that fact is freshly re-established then your Utopia must be regarded as a fraudulent enterprise, and what are you then? And where do you belong? I tell you, in jail just like this or that financial genius who founds a company on the Mississippi or in Alaska which exists only on paper."

At this point, Paco had raised his hands imploringly, "Yes, but our faith! Did not Christ say that we would accomplish greater signs and wonders than He?" Padré Damiano laughed roughly: "Oh, certainly! The greatest wonder is none other than this faith in this seemingly rotten stock. And that, not even because it has been revealed—that could be just an empty promise anyway—but because our heart has realized, the stock is sound: here is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—and not there or anywhere else, at least not for me. So now, be faithful and bold: believe, hope, and, above all, love! Your stock will yield more than a Utopia; it will give you the courage to be a person whom nothing can ever again harm or disappoint! For everything is yours, says Paul, but you are God's."

Paco had raised his hands again: "Yes, but Padré, if the life of the

Christian is no different from that of the others, if it doesn't yield more and finer fruit is there then any reason to assume that the truth of this faith is assured? Might I not just as well continue to believe in the old gods?"

Padré Damiano's broad, heavy face clouded over; he pushed out his lips, and his bloodshot, watery eyes narrowed: "If, in making this assertion you reproach Christians as a whole, then direct your charge against the majesty of God! For we human beings, all of us, are as we are according to His will. And remember, Padré Consalves, there is no inside and outside of the church. Before God, there aren't these barriers between religions which, for various reasons, we human beings seem to find necessary. Only one thing is incontrovertible: God is love and who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. Love, however, is the most discrete of virtues and it can emerge so transformed that we no longer recognize it at all. You want to see the resplendent fruits of the Christians outshining everything else! Good heavens—if that could be established with such statistical exactness, unbaptized humanity would come running to be baptized within twenty-four hours just to outdo each other in virtue. God's thinking isn't so practical, so calculated, so overbearing! Man is not a Buddhist, a Mohammedan, or a Christian because the brightest fruits of virtue reach their maturity in his particular religion, but because this heavenly raiment is handed on to him by his parents, and above all because it fits him: he can move about in it, it keeps him warm and he likes it; he keeps it clean and doesn't throw it away—for tradition, too, binds us to God. All these garments are, however, made from one and the same material: from God's love and the love for God!" Then the old man bent down to Padré Consalves' ear: "God doesn't go to Utopia! But He comes to this tear-drenched earth—comes again and again! For here is endless poverty, endless hunger, endless sorrow! God loves that which is entirely different from Himself; He loves the abyss, and He needs—for His Holy Name's sake understand me correctly—He needs sin! You understand me. He pours Himself out. He renews; God creates gods. The cosmos is His beloved Son who from Him, the Father, receives everything in the Spirit, in love. And this Son becomes what the Father wishes Him to be! God loves the world because it is imperfect. We are God's Utopia, but one in the process of becoming!"

Paco on his bunk sighed. The map on the ceiling was now entirely engulfed by the dusk. Sunken into the sea were the yellow coasts,

the white cities, the peaceful, serene people—and the field artillery barked in the distance; the mortars plopped. The bronze gong hummed. And Padré Damiano was—ah, yes; he must ask the horrible lawyer in lieutenant's uniform still a few more questions. He had to—what a lot he still had before him tonight! He had to act—possibly even to kill—and an unsuspecting man, perhaps!

Utopia—how right the old dogmatist was—Utopia was to blame for his having left the monastery. On the evening before his departure from the monastery, Padré Damiano had said a few more things to him. Padré Consalves already had a suit of layman's clothing in the cell and, indicating it, he said: "Padré Damiano! You wouldn't have believed it, would you, but I don't know why I'm sitting here in this cell; something must be done!"

The old man—but he wasn't actually so very old yet—had dropped his weight of two hundred pounds down onto the bunk. He puffed out his cheeks and nodded:

" 'Something must be done,' said the flea, and jumped." Padré Damiano said that as much in amusement as in earnest. "And this jump belongs to the whole, to the great flow of events—although nothing world-shaking came of it, nevertheless, as we have said, he jumped."

Finally, leaning far back, he had looked up at the ceiling; he studied the water stain for a long time. "Yes, who wouldn't like to have such a beautiful island in order to refresh himself there for a bit! There must be good air there too; naturally, any malaria has been wiped out, or there never was any. No snakes; no tigers either! Mortality rate very much lowered; everyone dies at the patriarchal age, gently, between white sheets. Good government, flourishing communities! And above all, no money! Ha, ha, you clever fellow! But tell me, how is it actually? Do these people up there on the ceiling really have free will, or are they gentle, docile, and easily led like sheep?"

"Certainly they have free will; more than we do here behind this grillwork everywhere, and more than the dull subjects under their exploiters!"

"But your islanders, nevertheless, very rarely come into a position where they have to use it, do they? If once they say: something must be done, then they also take such a leap, and then another, and their world is just as it was before: well-tempered and in order. But the leap was a satisfaction anyway, wasn't it?"

The old fellow roared with thunderous laughter, while Padré Con-

salves raised his chin angrily: "You just joke in generalities; that's always easy enough. As far as I'm concerned, I'll take back my free will which I sacrificed on the altar."

"All right, then, we'll come to the particular." Padré Damiano thrust his head forward like a bull. "See here. Here you have it: what you can take back is still there and not yet, as you so well express it, consumed by the sacrificial fire of the altar. No. Who put such ideas into your head? I certainly did not. Listen! God is like a clever woman: even when her lover swears and vows: here, take my will, all my freedom—he doesn't dream of it any more than the loving woman does, if she has an ounce of divine wisdom in her. Take then, the blank check that God has made out to you, I mean your freedom of action; take back the heavenly document—it belongs to you! But don't forget, the capital behind it is yourself. You have the divine sanction to dispose of yourself and everything that you have and are. It is surely a fat and heavy checkbook which you carry with you. Now, I shall be anxious to see to whom you will make out the individual checks, where you will surrender your freedom, piece by piece. You will see—the book will become noticeably thinner. You are, thanks be to God, not miserly! But be careful: the last check in the book—it does come to an end—make that one out to love, in some way or other to love; to something that is not you—but that needs you." And with that, the old man had got up and had come over to him; he had made the sign of the cross on his forehead and, in doing so, had whispered, "God is merciful! And you will die in the monastery!"

Those were the last words of the extraordinary old man who, because of the pictures and comparisons he drew from banking and business, was frequently reproached by especially zealous monks; some even doubted his orthodoxy. Padré Damiano liked, for instance, to tell legends which every one of his listeners thought were undoubtedly of Christian origin, and, in fact, took to be crystallizations of the Christian spirit. Then the old man might very well laugh maliciously when he held up the source before their eyes: Taoist, Buddhist, Mohammedan—and his ever-recurring final remark was, "Everything is yours, but you are God's!"

Padré Damiano was at that time already over sixty. Perhaps he had no longer experienced the day of visitation—as the monks would express it sometime in days to come. Paco let his thoughts tiptoe about in all the rooms of the monastery and his own past within these walls. But as often as the measured step of the guard passed tapping by his door, his memory congealed and the steps went pounding through his soul. In this silence, the step of the unsuspecting man

resounded dangerously—the guard who never dreamed that here on the bunk lay a man who was ever more and more seriously considering whether or not he would be justified in using his knife.

Paco's deliberations were not a matter of casuistic debate in which he drew upon moral theory for his argument; he listened, rather, within himself. In him there were the boy Paco, the young man, the monk, the sailor—the sailor who had never been in a stabbing brawl! —and the soldier, the comrade in arms. A whole circle of Pacos was holding a council of war, and the prisoner held out the knife to each of them questioningly and invitingly; each one passed it on to the next, and each was silent. Even the soldier said nothing; he only shrugged his shoulders and said, finally: No, not I! I'm tired—I, too, have a right to catch my breath for once! But thereupon, to everybody's surprise, there arose the monk—the theologian—and he said: In one case it is necessary and in that case I shall do it myself and on my responsibility—in one case. I don't like the machine guns which stand there aimed into the corridor; and the lieutenant is afraid. What will he do if his side withdraws and the town has to be abandoned? One knows the answer to that well enough! Even if he didn't feel a murderer behind him in such an eerie fashion, he would in that case simply have to carry out an order. He lets the prisoners come out of their cells, announces that they are to journey to X or Y; he gets them started along, and just as they are going down the steps—or perhaps down below in the inner court—from behind and from the side the machine gun begins to chatter in its charming fashion. They are not going to leave behind two hundred soldiers for the enemy. To defend oneself against crime is permissible; to defend the lives of the others is actually an ethical demand. Therefore, if this turns out to be the case— The theologian Paco looked very determined, while the Paco on the bunk tossed back and forth, sighing.

This formalistic dog wants to confess then, is afraid of hell. Paco shook his head: he hadn't gone to confession for twenty years and still felt no inclination to do so. And this fellow, after he'd done the devil knows what to the poor nuns, had suddenly got—one couldn't say a weak stomach—but anyway, a bad conscience. And now he had picked out him, of all people, whose opinion of this kind of justification diverged so completely from that of his penitent.

Paco rubbed his forehead as though he had to wake himself from a crazy dream. For twenty years he had, so to speak, made it a practice to avoid every sort of pointed argument in whatever domain. Even in the field of discussion, carried on far from the gates of action, he had accustomed himself to avoid the either-or with that smile which had

become a part of him. On that account he had taken part with terrible amazement in this war against his own cities and compatriots. As long as he was a soldier his yes or no never went beyond taking a position with regard to everyday matters; everything else he simply did, silently and tenaciously: he worked under the yoke.

Really, good Padré Damiano, the checkbook—oh, perhaps there really was one check remaining in it, and that one he should now make out to love. Love—that, too, is a word that is tossed out like dice: as it falls, so it lies. Or wasn't it love to be thinking of the two hundred who here, perhaps, were going to— He sat upright on the bunk with a jerk and listened: wasn't that coming closer all the time now, or was it the stillness of the night that carried the voices of the cannons more clearly?

He reached hurriedly, from force of habit, into his pocket and was surprised at himself for doing so; he knew perfectly well that for days now he had searched there in vain for a cigarette. For a second he had, ever again, this foolish hope that perhaps there was still one that had got squashed into a crease. Anyway, he didn't have any matches either. Slowly he got up from the bunk and went to the desk. In the now heavy dusk, he searched for anything; his hands wanted a definite occupation. In the drawer he found a little packet; he smelled it: snuff, and of excellent quality—certainly from the castle! He took a pinch and stuck the tinfoil pack into his pocket. Thank you, Padré Julio. You are continually kind and helpful. Only a pity that you didn't smoke cigarettes. He felt around in the middle drawer: notebooks, writing materials, a flyswatter, notepaper, sealing wax: it was not necessary to look. He began to drum lightly on the desk top as though it were a tambourine. Meanwhile he sneezed once resoundingly. The knife, he kept thinking. His thoughts sought a stimulating object for themselves; if only he had a cigarette, perhaps the knife would leave him in peace. Then he went to the door and listened. As the step of the guard happened just at that moment to go tapping by, he rapped on the door: he would like to be taken to the lieutenant. That sounded almost like a command, even though he smiled as he said it. It was not the sergeant but one of the two soldiers. The man went to ask the sergeant. Paco heard their voices at the end of the corridor.

My God, he thought—after all, I can't tell the lieutenant that I've come just to ask him for a cigarette. As he took another pinch of snuff, it occurred to him that he, Padré Consalves, would have liked to have forbidden the monks to use snuff. He shook his head: had he gone a step forward or backward? A strange vice, this smoking; and, in

general, the dependence on anything—just the same, the lieutenant will be happy, will place his cigarette case in front of him like a bribe; before confessing, he will want to get him into a friendly mood. Crazy world—and then people claim that it is the stars which bring men together. The cigarette, or the knife! But the knife is nothing but a pretense to bolster oneself up; nervousness that seeks an object, what else? The cigarette will be soothing; then he'll smile at his own courage, meek and satisfied. He had, in all his life, never yet killed a living thing with a knife; not even a chicken or a rabbit. He searched his memory for at least some such bloody excess as he strode along the corridor next to the soldier.

Although the corridor windows opened onto the inner court, they were nevertheless covered with sacking. Some candle stumps with blue shades stood on the floor. The shadows of the two men doubled over on the vaulted ceiling as though they were being bent by force, but the next light on the floor vanquished the previous shadow and thrust forward the new one in the new direction as though acting upon an inaudible command. Paco watched this play of shadows: his companion went along at the same pace as he, and his shadow was distorted in the same way, swallowed up and thrust in a different direction. Paco felt a sort of bond with the somber-looking older man and he asked him, "From Castile, aren't you?" The other took a quick look at him, as though he wanted to reject this intimacy. Just the same, he finally nodded. "You look like it," Paco smiled. "You doubtless have a wife and children?" "Children, yes!" The soldier said that softly, with a certain cautiousness, somewhat as though his answer touched upon a military secret.

They had reached the door of the library. Paco's mouth came close to the hairy ear of the dour man; his shadow bent down as the candles had made it bend down before, and he said, "God is merciful!" The other remained standing as though he were rooted to the spot. There issued forth from his bulbous nose a short blow which sounded like a rejection. It was followed, however, by a raucous snort in which there was something receptive and meditative—and with that, he opened the door.

The inside shutters of the library were closed. On the huge table stood a kerosene lamp with a blue shade; nearby the telephone glistened. A book lay in the lamplight and Lieutenant Pedro was bending over it. His hand, which now had a bluish-white hue, drummed almost cheerfully on the table as though he were reading something highly amusing. He did not look up as the two entered, but read on hurriedly; then, however, he thumped the book as an expression of

profound agreement with what he had read. He jumped up, shoved back the seat, and coming up to Paco with short, eager steps, shouted "It's enough to have imperfect contrition, simple fear of hell, in order to be validly absolved, and a good thing it is too. How should I, in my state—"

Paco looked at the speaker and let his gaze wander questioningly in the direction of the door where the soldier was still standing unsure whether he should go or not and at the same time staring full of curiosity at his superior.

"You there, go to the devil," the lieutenant barked out at him like a snapping dog.

The soldier pulled in his posterior, about faced, and then went out slowly and stiff-necked.

Paco muttered as though to himself, and in his voice there hovered the suggestion of that smile which dissolved all decisiveness.

"Maybe he wanted to confess too, who knows; don't you think one should ask him?"

Lieutenant Pedro threw a shy glance at Paco in passing, shrugged his shoulders, turned immediately on his heel, and showed his teeth under his mustache. He seemed almost pleased.

"God gives every person sufficient grace for salvation. That's what I found out anyway in this excellent tome." He pointed to the book.

Paco stepped nearer and pressed his hand on the table; in doing so, he had to bend over somewhat and, noticing the cigarette butt on the inkstand, he said, very nervously and distractedly, "Yes, the theologians haven't left anything out; their justification of God is really comprehensive. They take the part of God as though it were He and not man who stood before the bar of justice. But have you by any chance, a cigarette, Señor Teniente?"

The lieutenant reached quickly into his pocket, but as he opened the cigarette case something apparently occurred to him; he took a cigarette for himself, closed the silver case, let it slide slowly into his right trousers pocket, and just as slowly lit his cigarette. Blowing the smoke up against Paco, who was standing motionless, he grinned slyly:

"Not that you should imagine that I'm the kind—I would share my last cigarette with—oh, with anyone! But—the kingdom of God must suffer violence and only those resorting to violence can wrest it for themselves; I read that too and therefore I'm now using force and in a mean fashion—I'm aware of that. Now listen: you shall smoke right away, as much as you want to, but first I must ask you to hear my confession. I still somehow have the vague feeling that you want

to be urged—or that you don't want to do it at all, perhaps because I'm on the other side!"

Paco's face had turned to stone. He said brusquely, "There was once a man who wanted to buy the apostles' power with gold; you want to do it with a cigarette. Simon was accursed; you are making yourself ridiculous, Señor Teniente!" With that, however, Paco's voice immediately lost its solemnity and he said simply, "Nevertheless, it's a good thing for me that I have such a low opinion of confession, and particularly of yours! I could make this deal: a confession for a cigarette. If you were to give me a cigarette in a nice way, it would be worth more to me, and I believe actually to God, than a confession such as this which you are making only because you are scared of death and hell."

Then Paco smiled and said, "Be a human being, I don't even say a Christian—and give me a cigarette with no strings attached! Look, my fingers are trembling; I'm much overwrought—"

Paco held out his long emaciated hand and saw how the lieutenant stared at it without moving; he saw only the curly-haired head which turned to gaze at the hand and which then slowly raised itself. In the dim light of the lamp, the lieutenant's face looked still more pasty.

"Why then—you really are shaking!" The lieutenant tried to make his voice sound surprised; he went on softly, "Are you, too, kind of afraid—of—I don't know—these damned walls seem to exude fear like others do saltpeter. Perhaps this is the monks' way of avenging themselves. But tell me—are you afraid of—of something? Your hand is really shaking like anything— Have you—premonitions of death, like me? Or am I not permitted to know?"

"Oh!" Paco now drew back his hand, studied the palm for a while and traced the lifeline with the finger of the other hand. "A gypsy, yes—that comes back to me again now; she told me recently I was to die before long. It wasn't very difficult for her to prophesy that, was it? It was harder for Padré Damiano—yes, that comes back to me now again, too." He was silent, looking at his hand.

"Padré Damiano?" The lieutenant leafed through the book which lay in front of him and opened it to the title page. "Yes, that's right; Damiano. What did he say then; quite a clever fellow!"

"Oh, what did he say? Yes, that's right; that's his *Manual for Confessors*—my God, it was only yesterday that I, like you—and yet very differently!—sat before this book."

"But what did he say? I like this Padré Damiano, you know. Did he prophesy something to you?"

"Yes—"

Paco was now staring into the distance, through the wall of books, into the night, out across the plain: seamen's agencies, ports, taverns, ships, employers, prostitutes, lonely expanses of ocean, anchor capstan, zinc pails, East Indian stokers, coal, mess plates, white minarets—on the dull green, scarcely stirring surface of his soul there suddenly emerged, like little white waves in the infinite solitude of the living water, single pictures which swirled about briefly and vanished again. He heard the pilot's call from the little boat in the darkness below, he saw a coast appear and drift away again, he wrung out his shirt; spray, much spray, was blown onto the ship's planks, and the gypsy woman said—Padré Damiano prophesied, and before his wide-open eyes the past circled like sparks and stars. Everything had changed into signs, had become an undecipherable script which had gathered together his life in syllables, not leaving out a single hour. And now when he was fearful, anxious to learn, and full of the desire to decipher these signs which were glimmering in the distance already, he felt: I won't succeed; I have forgotten everything, even the A B C's in which my life is written out. The signs in which I used to write myself down so naturally now look to me like some antiquated script which has long since fallen into disuse. I am in it, and it doesn't belong to me any more; my past has become strange to me; everything is over and I can no longer enter into it. Oh, how poor one can become!

Something like longing for himself overcame him, but then he shook his head in resignation. And yet, did not Padré Damiano always say, everything is yours? All right, everything, but no longer one's own individuality; or did it come back by some other route? Because, yes: "You, however, are God's!" Then he also said, "God is merciful." Yes—and "you will die in the monastery!"

Paco, speaking as though in a deep dream, had said Padré Damiano's words loudly and clearly, and with that he seemed to wake up. He did not even notice how the lieutenant, who had permitted his cigarette to burn down to ashes on the inkstand, let his hand reach down cautiously into his pocket and place the cigarette case softly on the table. Only as the lighter clicked open did Paco come back out of the distance. He saw the silver case with the little white sticks, took one quietly and said, "Yes, God is— Thank you."

The lieutenant held out the lighter to him; he watched sympathetically the face of the man who was greedily breathing in the cigarette smoke, then gazed for a moment longer into the bluish flame before he extinguished it with a quick movement of his thumb.

"This damned war!" he exclaimed. "But," he began in an entirely

different tone of voice, raising his head again in his cool, observant fashion, "if you attach such importance to Padré Damiano's prophecies—and that—that is very respectful of you—how do you happen to disagree with his high opinion of confession?"

Paco pulled over a chair and sat down. The lieutenant excused his "lack of courtesy" because of the "crazy circumstances" and once more looked questioningly at Paco.

"My good Don Pedro—you will be a lawyer one day if you—well, yes—if you get out of this; I mean out of this, as you say, damned war—you will make a good examining judge. Probably, of course, it will work out differently—you won't get out of this—" Paco was silent and stared at the lieutenant with a lost and absent expression. The night seemed to be filled with sounds made by the short, deep plucking of the strings on a harp. The invisible window panes chirped and hummed as though the inner shutters were the doors to large insect cases. As a truck rumbled through the street, it was as though the heat and dust in the closed off library were shaken up in a dark blue bottle.

Lieutenant Pedro wiped the sweat off himself. "That's it, all right," he said then, soberly. "I, too, have this lousy premonition—and just on that account I run after you in this shameless fashion—and then you tell me that you have no use for confession. Padré Damiano, on the other hand—"

Paco moved his hand in a gesture of protest. "Padré Damiano wanted to help, nothing more." He dropped his hand with the cigarette carelessly onto his leg: if one could be as decided as that wonderful old man, he thought. He saw Padré Damiano—it was more than twenty years ago—standing in front of him in this library, the same book, not the same copy, in his hand. Breathing heavily, the big man had said, "You don't precisely have to preach it or say it to your penitents, but the old church didn't yet know our form of confession. The adulterers, murderers, and renegades were excluded from the church; that was that! That was the church of the saints. We have become a church of sinners. Without confession the church would be like a city without a fire department. Don't force anyone to come to confession but if anyone comes of his own accord, then, you may be sure there's something wrong; if you discover that nothing is really burning, then send him off. But be careful: a consuming holy fire may also need the perfection of confession, and then you have only to clear out the ashes. Do you understand?"

That was Padré Damiano's language. After decades it was all still clear and impressive to Paco. The images and analogies were any-

thing but poetic in the sense of having the flowery charm which Padré Julio loved—such pictures fade quickly, while these—like this knife beneath the hand in his trousers pocket, they were edged and meant business. "We are the providence of others," he used to say, but each time with an expression of awe on his face, and afterwards he sighed, "Yes, and whoever believes in miracles can no longer work any. It is bad, bad, little brothers, is this business of providence. But we still have love; that will probably have to see us through!"

"What are you thinking about?" asked the lieutenant. "You are so strange!" Paco started, and looked sharply at the man across from him.

"I am thinking of a dead man, of Padré Damiano." Paco was still gazing piercingly at Don Pedro, who raised his head attentively.

"You mean—"

Paco nodded. "He was very fat, watery-eyed; had a regular bulldog's face—yes, that's what it was!" Paco moved his chair away a little; his eyes, sharp as knives, were now on the lieutenant.

The stocky figure of the young officer had turned away from the questioner a little, as though he were thinking hard; finally he raised the upper part of his body, took hold of the book, closed it slowly and placed it gently on the table. He was silent for a while; he held his head drawn in between his shoulders, and then nodded; his words came with an uncanny precision.

"I directed the clearing out of the monastery myself; I did not once fire a shot; I did not even have a revolver in my hand, but if you refer to a short, heavy man with watery eyes and a bulldog face, then I myself—with these hands—have thrown him over the banister. He was the only one who had left his cell; he came up to us—"

Paco nodded, staring into space; he smiled. "That was he—I can see him clearly before me. He gave you a piece of his mind, didn't he?"

The lieutenant nodded eagerly. "He came right up to me; I was in front, standing just by the banister. As he caught sight of me he called, 'Yes, you little heliotrope—' "

"Heliodorus," corrected Paco. "He meant the defiler of the temple."

"Oh, he did." Lieutenant Pedro swallowed and nodded, understanding. "And so he came up to me. My men were so dumfounded, as was I myself, at his bearing, that look, and the wallop of his fist, that I came to only when I heard a terrific roaring in my left ear. He had given me a box on the ear, the worst I'd ever had in my life!"

"And he must have been over eighty," murmured Paco, full of admiration and sorrow.

"Yes, and then he called out a few more words; I no longer heard

very well what he said. I had already grabbed him up and thrown him backwards over my shoulder, over the banister."

"You must be very strong," said Paco softly, and he studied the body of the young officer with unusual exactitude. "Just the same, you are a brute, Señor." He added with equal gentleness, "You are the murderer of the kindest person I ever knew!"

Don Pedro grasped the book again, shook his head, and said placatingly, "You are right. But what was I to do in this case! I was furious, and besides, I was obeying orders. And an order—"

Just at these words, the telephone began ringing; both men started. The lieutenant glanced at the instrument, his brows drawn together; he looked as though he were afraid the telephone might be a time bomb. He jumped up, ran to the door, called the guard, and said to Paco hurriedly, "Please go to your cell for a minute. I shall have you called."

The same gruff old soldier once more accompanied him along the corridor at the same pace as before. Again their shadows bent on the vaulted ceiling, intertwined, fused, and vanished to rise again anew as they passed the next candle. Suddenly both their shadows jerked back out of the vaulting and were cast in small size on the wall opposite the candle. This lasted only an instant; both had made a sort of knee bend when the insect-like, rapacious yowl of a suddenly diving airplane, which until that moment had been only an already too familiar even humming in the distance, was followed by a crash, an explosion, and a tremor which made the heavy monastery walls jump. Then there followed a few hits, thudding raindrops of iron but already falling farther away, and again only the humming was to be heard, a distant mosquito's buzz about which they were no longer concerned. Only now did the small artillery pieces commence to bark, but from a considerable distance, and there mingled with that sound the hollow roar of antiaircraft guns which shook the air like trumpet blasts.

Paco listened carefully. There were few guns, and they must be outside the town toward the east since they started only after the planes had dropped their bombs on the town. Did that mean retreat? Perhaps the lieutenant was just receiving his orders.

The prisoners in the cells remained quiet. There was whispering behind some of the doors; somewhere a rough voice laughed out stridently, then the walls of the monastery stood there in their gray piety, heavy and still.

The soldier remained standing, motionless, by the cell door. Peer-

ing to the right and to the left, he whispered across the dim passage, "Are you a priest?"

Paco nodded.

"Bless me, Padré!"

"Do you want to make your confession?"

The soldier quietly shook his head. "No. I haven't done anything; I only heard the nuns screaming—I held my ears. It was a long night. I thought of my children, six of them, all still not of age, girls too! And so I'd like to have your blessing, Padré."

He whispered, and a few times in between took a deep breath. Paco touched his forehead with his thumb and made the sign of the cross over him:

"God is merciful!"

The soldier nodded and turned away with a stubborn shrug but, remembering his duty, he turned back again just as quickly and waited, his hand on the bolt.

Paco said to him with sudden joviality, "You shouldn't think, my friend, that the monks had such bolts on the doors! Those were put on by you."

The soldier whispered just as genially but more roughly, "And tomorrow you will lock me up in here, Padré; only the fleas in there remain the same—only the fleas!"

Scarcely had Paco sat down on the bunk when he suddenly had to think of them again—the fleas, yes; how odd this repetition had sounded from the mouth of this taciturn fellow. They had actually been bothering him all day but he hadn't thought of them; as he scratched himself angrily, he had to laugh aloud in the dark. That was how the old monk had filled out the last check in his checkbook, with a box on the ear—that can come out of the innermost core of love, such a good resounding whack on the ear. Oh yes, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, brawny Don Pedro! But what good does it do; you only look into the well when you're thirsty. As though God were only there for you alone and only to improve your bad dreams for you, and to protect you from another far worse dream after you are dead. God gives sufficient grace to each of us. You are right there, if only you knew exactly what the grace is that God bestows on you so sufficiently. It is something different for every individual—let's see. And Paco felt his hand, which was lying very relaxed on his right leg, to be bedded there in a pleasantly hard and definite fashion. Grace on the knife's tip, grace for all of us! Not only for you, salvation-chasing Don Pedro. You are strong, very strong in fact! Padré Damiano weighed more than two hundred pounds, and his prophecy

carried weight too, a great deal in fact! What a rogue; how suavely you went about it—preparing me for my death, so to speak, with a cigarette—really! Gave me a cigarette; placed the case before me, a sort of hangman's meal! Damned war, indeed! I do take Padré Damiano's prophecy seriously—oh, not at all out of piety, as you think, you clever fellow. I notice something, notice a lot of things.

The walls of the monastery had remained for some time in heavy silence, like a sleeper who, between breaths, lies as though dead. But then, from a soft whirring in the air which vanished again at first, there grew a humming with which the silent space was interwoven with waves of sound, ever closer together, until a sudden yowl, as though the spirits of heaven rushed howling down a wooden stairway to the earth, swallowed up all humming. Now this earsplitting, raucous din outroared the yowling: the earth vibrated like a drum.

Paco jumped up from his reflections, panting angrily, and ducked down as though he were in an open field; in this movement it was his body which took the lead. Then he sat there quietly; he fancied that he was holding within his hands not only his own skull but the gray monastery walls, in fact the whole town. And it seemed to him as though these hands were not made of vulnerable flesh and bones but of something indestructible. At the same time, he felt a sympathy for his body, for the blood pounding in his temples, a sympathy, as it were, for things that actually had nothing to do with him anymore. The stones of the monastery, the houses of the town, the cypresses, juniper bushes, and chestnut trees—all were equally near to him, lay under his skull, were entirely within him. So he held his hands over it and listened to the hits, counted them, estimated the distance of the antiaircraft guns, their number, their position—yes, they were already to the east—that was absolutely certain now. Finally he became aware of the fleas again and he let them bite without trying to protect himself. From time to time he just whispered softly and without any special thought, "Dios mio!" His voice sounded like that of an object: of a distant car clattering along, of a window rattling, of a wooden cabinet shaken to its core and groaning. What he muttered came out of him like a lonely and feeble sound, finding not the slightest echo in his own consciousness. His thoughts lingered entirely elsewhere; or rather, they wandered aimlessly without lingering, and thus his attention turned again to the fleas.

The Carmelite Theresa organized a procession of supplication in her convent against fleas! This saint was a determined woman. At that time there was probably no insect powder, or the nuns didn't know about it, at least. Therefore God had to help personally. And

why not! Whoever believes that he can move heaven by prayer might just as well ask for little things as for big ones. Besides, fleas are no small matter! The itching is really worse than the inner jolt at the crash of a bomb. A crazy idea: God destroys the fleas out of love for his children; God deflects the bomb from its target because there under that roof someone is praying—and it falls on the next roof where someone sits silently wringing his hands and can only just stammer, "In the Name of God" before it crashes. Yes, indeed, Padré Damiano, we are the providence of others. In hitting me, the fellow up there in the plane has very good intentions toward me, perhaps. There is room everywhere for well and badly aimed bombs. As for our reproaches, no matter at whom we may be aiming them our querulous reproaches are all duds; they don't even land. They dissolve in the air, or they even fall back on us, ourselves. Shut up, Paco; you're good for nothing! But just the same, as Padré Damiano said, whoever believes in miracles can't work any anymore. If, however, I should not be able to believe in miracles anymore—it is hard to believe in miracles!

I have unlearned everything, thought Paco sorrowfully, that could make life a little easier for me. Utopia—another one of many pious self-deceptions—has disappeared; it's dark up there on the ceiling. But probably it's best like that: before the curtain rises, it becomes dark in the theater. You just have to look straight ahead and keep your eyes open; don't fall asleep!

The cessation of the noise affected his strained eardrums like a new, arousing sound: the silence had been given a voice. Thus it is, perhaps, thought Paco, when the pounding in our temples stops; when the throbbing, beating, pounding of this world stops altogether —ah, the silence. It swells like a great dewdrop, becomes bigger and bigger, and if the whole world were a single stalk of grass it could no longer support this swelling, glistening ball. The silence weighs more than everything, more than everything in the world. It is the alpha and omega of each sound and voice. Silence is like a bed—thought Paco; it is full of begetting and full of bringing home in death, and full, too, of the dreams which lie behind and under the words. Silence! thought Paco, and he bent over; in the last analysis, it is the very Word of God.

He got up and groped his way to the window; he opened the shutters and at the same time raised himself up slowly on tiptoe and stretched his arms backward; he took a deep breath. The air had become noticeably cooler; his forehead, his nose, his gums, even his chest could feel it. He thought: and the Word was made flesh—that

would be, the silence received a voice and further, the dream became reality! That is to say (didn't he smell something burning?), one really had to admit that this realization of a divine dream is anything but a measurable quantity. He came unto His own and His own received Him not—the Logos, the Word! One cannot comprehend anything any more. There is something on fire somewhere; evidently not in the monastery but it can't be far off. All these feet in the alley all of a sudden—oh, the light in the darkness! Yes, that must be put out. They have the moon as a torch for the work—or won't they do any more fire fighting? Fortunately there's no wind and there isn't much wood in the houses. Paco toyed with the knife. In any case, he must be on the lookout to find a way out of here, just a way out. Everything that we undertake, what is it except a way out, to the devil knows where!

The crescent moon hung invisible behind the monastery roof; the sky swam in a misty light in which the stars seemed like thickenings, like knots in a net of light. In the distance a flare sank slowly down onto the plain, and as it went down below the line of the horizon its glow became brighter on the dark ground. A noise, like a muffled weathercock, now trickled in from the distance; in it was fused something of both monotony and anger; on foggy days the steam engine by the capstan bar and the anchor hoist rattled in a similar lulling and yet provocative fashion. Below in the darkness, by the town wall, a dog barked hoarsely, but so briefly that it seemed as though the animal recognized the futility of his activity and withdrew into silence.

Paco's fists held the bars and, without his really knowing why, shook them quickly and hard. The rust which had stood on the file dents for twenty years had eaten away the iron to such an extent that the grating would have fallen down by itself some day. He was amazed at how easily it went; the lower bars were already broken, and he bent them up and outward and shook again—and the grating went plunging downward. The brief thud—Paco leaned out as though he would be able to see something—the fall of the grating sounded meaningless: just old iron fallen into underbrush, stones, and refuse! One probably attached too much significance to bars, and probably also to freedom. Something like that should crash down with a clattering thud; should shake the walls with its rebound! And now the window, open just as he had imagined it hours before in the cloister garden when he asked for his cell with the filed bars, ought to entice him; a rainbow bridge should lead somewhere, to some place; in this case it was a question of a way to freedom. But still—if he were now to break out, there would be claimants for his freedom waiting for him there

below in a thousand forms. He recalled the story which he had read in the paper some weeks ago about a man who had gone off into the woods and had lived there for over ten years as a free and peaceful hermit, his only care being that no one should put him into harness. There he was discovered, probably by a woman looking for berries; the police brought him back and the man was brought into court. Since, during his period of freedom, he had avoided important duties to society, he was now punished with a few years in the penitentiary. Evidently, the freedom of the woods was no more. Some fled into the monastery; he himself was one of the fools who believed that there he would have the greatest possible freedom. Then it was sure to be still better at sea. There too, however, the law appeared in the person of the third or fourth officer, of some fellow beset with ambition or with the importance of his own puny powers who gave his orders and little commands in a Vasco da Gama voice so that one wondered that the sailors didn't forget how to spit their plugs overboard independently and on their own initiative.

The truth shall make you free! It always had a very enticing sound —the truth! But these abstractions are like goatskins into which each pours his own wine and gets tipsy on it—on the wine, not on the goatskins—and from which he lets the stream shoot into his mouth. "But no one fills new wine into old skins"; that He Himself had said. As to the vessel of Truth, it had become cracked, at least as far as he was concerned—for him standing by this unbarred window. He would have to make himself a new container and peel the skin not off a billy goat but off himself! Whoever, while he is alive, can skin himself in a particular manner—it is not an altogether painless process—he has found the right container for the drink of life. He has made a leather flagon of the real truth which belongs to him. The truth! For how long one continues to confuse it with its changing, infinite contents; one selects and rejects and thereby one grows weary, as weary and resigned in the end as that Roman provincial governor, as the endless procession of those caught up in the gold rush for truth who return home spent and dull-eyed, eternally muttering to themselves their "quid est." There was One who did not ask "What is it?" but said "I am"—and so we say after Him, "I am the Truth," in painful repetition; "yes, and it shall make me free," murmured Paco.

The dog barked again, three times, four times; the fifth bark was a weak thrust against the shield of the night. "I am the Truth," murmured Paco, weighing the words, and unconsciously his hand scratched his side—"for, then I shall measure out the whole of reality; I shall gather it under my skin and they will think it is muscles and bones

under my skin whereas it will now be only reality: that which is, which must be, which happens. God is not Himself the happening; He is not Pedro and not Paco; He is not the barking of the dog, not the flashing of the cannons' mouths in the distance and not the rumbling in the night—and still He is the heart of the world which sets all this in motion; the paw of a cruel, playing cat and the machine gun, but perhaps not this fist on the handle of the knife. No; He doesn't need my will and my freedom—presented as a gift, as a sacrifice; He takes what He needs. One thing is certainly true, however: one should do everything that one does gladly. Paco lowered his head; he leaned on the window sill: gladly—out of love!

Suddenly he clutched his temples violently with both hands: out of love, what did that mean, anyway! To run Pedro through the ribs with the knife out of love and then say with Damiano, too bad, little brother, but love still remains to us! Oh, Pedro would be glad to forego that, for the individual man happens to have the obstinate prejudice that the encounter with love is always associated with pleasant feelings.

During this war I have killed four soldiers, four enemies, four Spaniards, at close quarters. Paco let his hands drop down loosely—and perhaps many others as well from a distance—I had to! But the point is: I didn't like to do it!—no trace of love is in either the action or the aim which is entirely unknown to me. But there it already began, the skinning of myself. And if the skin is now off entirely, and if instead of the old contents the new slips into this container; oh, the reality, the nonindividual reality, the reality which answers no questions!—if it fills me and I from then on move and act, I act no longer of myself but It acts, It lives. No, that is not yet God, that is life. My sin is now the sin of life; I am only the executive organ—an automaton— But no—an automaton is without pain, and besides he doesn't do anything gladly, out of love; out of a love which I myself do not comprehend—out of love for Him Whom I do not know, but Whom perhaps I nevertheless shall meet—out of love of joy, who knows! He is silence—one must not forget that. Signs and wonders should not be expected but by joy one shall know Him. Early, it is in one like a gift, and late—also like a gift. In the morning, however, the gift is laughter without insight; then in the evening, one knows why one laughs; at least those who have freed themselves have known. That takes time; reality takes possession of us only gradually and very painfully. But when we have become its skin, its measure, its form, we say, "I am the truth," and we say, "I am free!"

Truly, Padré Damiano, God does not want our freedom as a sacri-

fice; that is the mystical game of the rationalist. God lets us distribute it in a thousand services, that "blank check on ourselves." If, when we have finally gambled it away, when we are entirely broke and are standing a little dazed or even horrified, we recognize that we are not the lords but the servants of life; oh then, then our "joy is made perfect" because we feel our worth precisely, because we are caught and brought under the yoke. We no longer comprehend how we could actually have imagined ourselves free in that unbridled freedom of the foal in the meadow, in that animalistic plunging about—in the nonobjective, the unreal.

The dog began to bark again, wearily, mechanically; in the animal's bark there was no expression whatsoever anymore. It sounded almost as though the four-footed creature wanted only to find out if it still had life in itself. Paco held his ears. "Damned beast!" He ground his teeth, and it seemed to him that in his thoughts just now he had really been doing nothing different from this animal. Wasn't it all just barking in the dark, against the darkness inside and out? The dog wants to hear his own voice and man his own thoughts, and each gets tired, the dog of his barking and man of his thinking.

Paco had not heard the knock nor the movement of the bolt. He only held his ears; the dog barked longer this time— As Don Pedro suddenly stood next to him in the dark, he was not at all startled but only let his arms sink down exhausted. "What's supposed to be the trouble? Don't you hear that?"

Don Pedro went to the window and leaned far out; he shook his head. Apparently he hadn't noticed the absence of the grating, and it occurred to Don Pedro even less to observe that Paco held his ears against a dog's barking which had already ceased. "It is your artillery," he said finally through the darkness. He closed the shutters and snapped open his cigarette lighter, and with the little flame he came up to Paco. "Perhaps we may yet have to leave here tonight; I'm waiting for further orders. What we hear out there is still pretty far away but they are motorized units, perhaps just advance units. In any case, I think the situation suffices for you finally to hear my confession. I have prepared everything in the library." Lieutenant Pedro said that coolly and insistently.

Paco stood there openmouthed. "Prepared everything? Oh, for a confession."

"Come!" Lieutenant Pedro ordered; he was already striding down the echoing passageway. Paco followed him.

At the end of the western corridor, and consequently near the stairwell where the north wing began, Paco looked about him; it

suddenly seemed roomier to him here. Only in the library did it occur to him that there had been only one machine gun standing there. Where, then, was the other one?

The library lay in the subdued blue light of the table lamp exactly as before, but in the place which Lieutenant Pedro had previously occupied there now stood an easy chair with leather-upholstered back and armrests. It had formerly—Paco still remembered well this custom of the monastery—served to hold a large, illuminated edition of the Holy Scripture. Over the back of the chair hung a violet-colored stole which the lieutenant indicated with the gesture of a discreet bishop's servant.

Paco passed his hand over his mouth; the stubble crackled. He swallowed down a laugh and only said sarcastically, "Even a stole and a very venerable chair. Well, we certainly have the ceremonial to help along the imagination a little."

The lieutenant looked at him defiantly. "Why do you joke? I know just as well as you do that these external things have nothing to do with the essence of the sacrament."

"Well, never mind. I'm in favor of the essential and in this case that is already external enough for me."

"Tell me"—the lieutenant came nearer to Paco with a slow step, and his fat face betrayed uncertainty, even fear—"do you, by any chance, not believe in the sacrament?"

Paco placed his hand on his shoulder, "Don't worry, Señor Teniente! It's all the same whether I believe or not. You would have found that out too by reading further in Padré Damiano's book. Confession as *opus operatum,* as a sacrament, doesn't depend on the belief of its administrant. The church is very thorough, and she is cautious as well. What is necessary is that I be ordained and that we do everything in the intention of the church. Then it happens; even if you are the mangiest cur on God's earth, through the merits of Christ you are again elevated into the state of grace. You as a lawyer must find pleasure in this expression, state of grace!—and in this procedure in general."

The lieutenant lowered his head and simply repeated, "The mangiest cur on God's earth; yes, that is exactly the feeling that I have about myself. And I am glad that you are here and that there is confession. Only I don't understand," he raised his eyes to Paco reproachfully as he said this, "why do you, as you already told me earlier, have such a low opinion of confession?"

Paco gave the chair a shove and then looked up. The muffled din in the night had become louder again.

"My opinion can be so much rubbish as far as you are concerned." Paco bit his lower lip and stared at the floor; then he went on, "Figure it out for yourself! There, sitting in the cells, are about two hundred men, up to their necks just as deep as we are in dirt and darkness. These men have the same chance as you and I do of staying alive or dying." Paco's piercing look, as he said this, struck the lieutenant between his protruding eyes and thus held him fast until he finally turned away with a painful jerk. "All right, then!" said Paco, satisfied with this movement of his companion. "Then you understand me." His voice sounded very knowing, but veiled at the same time. "And yet you set great store by confession; that is, by the precept of faith that here and here alone God receives men back into the state of grace. If this is really your opinion and still you can sit down to this sumptuous banquet of grace without inviting the others in the neighborhood, then you are the most detestable rich glutton imaginable."

"Listen!" Lieutenant Pedro's voice was meditative and yet very incisive. He looked at his wristwatch. "It is now twelve-twenty. You still have just about an hour's time, I imagine, but—no, wait. We shall do it this way!" The lieutenant held his hand to his ear as though he were listening to see whether his watch was running or not. That, however, was only a gesture to distract his companion; as Pedro noticed that Paco was still looking at him with the same knowing expression, he put his hand over his eyes, bowed his head, and acted as though he were thinking. Then he lowered his hand with a determined gesture and gazed at Paco with a very cocky expression which the latter understood only much later. "See here, Padré. I shall have the prisoners all invited—I mean, brought—to the refectory—" They both restrained a smile; the lieutenant then extended it, however, to a slight grin as though the chance for a little fun were most welcome to him. "Yes, and you give the fellows general absolution!"

Paco nodded thoughtfully: "So that's the idea. All right then! The man you threw down the stairs continues to be effective. I had never thought that a manual for confessors could have results such as these."

"Are you satisfied?"

Paco interposed in a warmer tone of voice, "You are a strange fellow, but you're more decent than I thought." He looked at the lieutenant in almost sympathetic astonishment.

"Don't say that." This softly spoken sentence came dejectedly out of the blue haze, very dejectedly, but at the same time cunningly; then the lieutenant, as though he wanted to wipe out this remark

which he had made unintentionally, immediately asked, "Do you now have a better opinion of confession?"

Paco thought of the deeper meaning of this general absolution, and so his words took on a cool, didactic tone; his thoughts were already in the refectory.

"I repeat, my opinion is no concern of yours. But if you must know what I think about it, to my mind it is not the sacrament that is the *opus operatum* but, if one can put it that way, God Himself! He needs no words or things through which to impart Himself. The church knows that too, for she honors many holy hermits who never confessed or received communion, and she also believes in the efficacy of God and His grace outside her visible bounds. But then, why shouldn't we Christians, as well as the pagans, have sacraments!"

His own words seemed to him to be as brittle and lifeless as eggshells, only there to conceal the formless and gentle force of his thoughts that ran along such different lines. How is this going to work out now?—asked his look, appraising the place which was so familiar to him and where he had sat over his books as a young monk. How is it going to come about, that I kill a man—one who reveals his soul to me; a repentant man, absolved and unburdened—kill him with a knife from behind, bending over him as though I wanted to embrace him: Peace be with you! This picture had something so terrible about it for Paco that for a moment he believed he had gone mad. In his student days, the professor of moral theology had often used extreme examples. But all of these cases of Titus and Gaius were most elaborately devised and full of frightful moral entanglements. They always dealt with abstract situations which were far removed from life, and only a cool and well-instructed mind was needed in order to reach the right verdict. They didn't concern oneself at all and, most important, the frightful element in these cases had a fairy tale-like remoteness that gave these sham moral battles a certain charm.

Now where was the same Padré Consalves who had solved these cases so brilliantly: Paco glanced at the other side of the table at one very special place which he had always preferred. He saw himself sitting there, and his eyes became fixed, as though spellbound, upon Padré Consalves.

The lieutenant asked hesitantly, "What is the matter with you?"

"Oh," Paco wrinkled his forehead and nodded, "I was thinking how I, as Padré Consalves, used to sit there. Can we actually change ourselves; what do you think?"

Pedro shook his head; he deliberated sadly and then he thrust his chin forward in a decided and brutal pose:

"I wish it were so. Still, I can hardly believe that it is. Since my childhood I have been—bad—a beast. When I was scarcely twelve years old, for instance, to choose just one example out of many, I hung cats by their tails over a piece of meat until they—well!"

"Hey!" Paco almost shouted that and held up his hands against him. Then he asked, and his voice sounded astonished, like that of a clown, "And that made you happy?"

"Happy? What do you think? On the contrary it made me sad."

"Why were you so determined to be sad? Weren't you ever happy?"

"Happy?" Don Pedro said the word and listened to it afterwards as a musician might to a tone from a tuning fork.

"But you can imagine to yourself the feeling of joy, can't you?"

"Oh, yes—certainly, but I was never happy; perhaps I was as a little boy, but not happy as you mean it. I had a puppet theater, and above all, an odd audience composed of the chairs and tables, and the pictures on the walls! I played for hours at a time, gruesome pieces that I made up myself. I was master of my puppets; they had to do what I wanted and they carried out every command. For example, I had someone beheaded, and the executioner boasted about it proudly: then I had him beheaded too. I enjoyed his astonishment. But the executioner of the executioner, stupid fellow, boasted in the same manner, and then he too had his turn; he was hanged. The one who strung him up came off no better. Afterwards I had no executioner left, and then I would always appear on the stage in person and perform the last execution. After that I looked into the empty room and waited. The chairs, the tables, the pictures on the walls stared at the stage as though they were under a spell; what would happen now? And then I had a feeling; that was like joy! I was waiting for an executioner, believe it or not, who would behead me, a little boy."

Paco stared at the speaker, wide-eyed.

Don Pedro said, "You are horrified, aren't you?" and lowered his face. He was grinning with embarrassment. "You are right. One probably can't call this feeling joy."

"Hardly!" whispered Paco, and he, too, turned away his gaze from the other. They were both silent for a while.

Paco began again, but in a different tone, "Yes, but if we can't change ourselves, if you don't change, then what sense is there in your contrition and your good resolve?"

Lieutenant Pedro raised his broad shoulders very high and pulled his head in; then he blew out his breath. "Say, that isn't part of con-

fession. You're supposed to give me absolution but you just make me still sadder!"

"Oh," that sounded regretful, "you see, it's because I should like the confession to really help you. I want you to open yourself to God! He can change you; He alone, not confession! There are hundreds of thousands of sinners absolved daily, not one of whom changes on that account. And yet we must change, or don't you think so?" These last words were uttered with an almost childlike helplessness.

The lieutenant nodded, "I dwell in myself as though in a grave!"

"Come out! God is a God of the living, it says, not of the dead! You are, have been from your youth on, as the story of the cats and that of the puppet theater reveal, overly intellectual and brutally sensuous. Where these two qualities are combined, cruelty sits like a spider! God is your Creator—show yourself to Him as you are. He can change you, He alone!"

With his last words, Paco sat down in the easy chair; he heard the cats whine and saw the little boy staring out of the puppet theater with bulging eyes into the empty hall: Paco was tired and the easy chair was just in front of him. It flashed through his mind that even as a child this poor fellow was already waiting for the executioner. A sewage-field of his ancestors, the rottenness and spiritual decay of fifty generations were collected in this person, in this defenseless individual!

Paco sat down carelessly on the cushion and, as he did so, he had a feeling similar to that which he had had before as a sailor whenever he again set foot on the ship's planks: an unexpected peace brought about by nothing in particular filled him. When he got up from the seat, the torments of the last few hours were no longer there; he didn't even feel the knife pressing against his right thigh. It was not that his awareness of his situation and of his decision had become dimmed, but that he no longer felt the frightfulness in his intention, the eeriness in this combination of two irreconcilable duties. It had become a case of Titus and Gaius; but instead of his being able to observe the procedure in fairy-tale detachment, he now sat in the midst of it and thereupon his contemplation came abruptly to an end. Now, too, there could be no more question of argument and verdict. Automaton, the word echoed in Paco's mind—but don't I do it gladly?—voluntarily?

The lieutenant handed him the stole; it had slid to the floor as Paco sat down in the chair. Paco bent over the violet strip of cloth

and, as though he had done so every day for twenty years, he kissed the embroidered cross on it and placed the silk around him. His lips were already murmuring the Latin words of blessing which the priest directed to the penitent. With the concluding words, "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti," he turned to the low-kneeling figure and blessed him.

The chair stood half turned away from the table; the lieutenant knelt at an angle near the knees of his confessor, who was now silent and who, keeping his large eyelids lowered, took a few deep breaths. Paco felt as though he were a figure in a cruel legend who stood there in unalterable letters, stood there still only for the purpose of being read: he himself was long since dead.

The young officer noticed the transformation of the other man with a sensation bordering equally on terror and on sympathy. Paco's way of lifting his hand to bless had, if one had witnessed his almost derisive attitude of a few moments earlier, something startling about it. For he blessed not like one who does that of himself but rather in an entirely unprivate, impersonal way—from a distance, as it were, but full of strength and authority.

Just at the moment when the lieutenant raised his voice to confess, there came the sound of the disturbing buzzing of airplanes, and soon the spitting and crackling of the antiaircraft began. It was as though the darkness were being rent asunder and a big cloth hung in the empty sky and was flapping in the wind. The penitent hesitated, but the other man waited without any movement; then he said softly, "Go ahead!" Lieutenant Pedro, his shoulders hunched down and his voice equally cringing, uttered his self-accusation in spurts; he stopped briefly after each sentence as though he were listening to the iron blows which fell muffled to earth, sometimes nearby, sometimes more distant. The windowpanes again began to chirp like insects and the walls shuddered from time to time as though a chill were running through the stone. Nevertheless, the man in the big chair looked as though he had gone to sleep, but suddenly he shuddered too, and just at this instant the library lay still as a beehive; even the humming in the air had become softer.

The penitent had noticed this movement and stopped speaking; he almost croaked, "Yes, I know, I know—it must be terrible for you to hear this!"

The figure in the chair moved now. "I tell you, it would be good for you if you were to die in this war." The voice was silent; after a pause it went on, "Yes, pray to God for death. According to the laws of man—but no, you know that!—no sin can separate you from

God if you want to come back to Him, but it can separate you from life. For this reason, the death penalty for certain crimes has a decidedly compassionate character. You are a criminal of this sort. Pray to God for death!"

The figure on the floor was panting. Neither spoke for a moment. Suddenly the lieutenant let out a muffled cry—the telephone rang shrilly. It occurred to Paco sitting there that this bell did not actually have a very loud ring. He looked into the face of the cowering lieutenant, who sprang up, still crouching, and with a catlike leap stood by the instrument.

"Shall I go out?"

The lieutenant made a negative gesture and said hurriedly, "Stay. We're in the midst of confession after all!"

Paco wanted to object, wanted to say, "This telephone conversation lies outside the secrecy of the confessional—from every standpoint," but he said nothing and meanwhile he scrutinized the lieutenant at the telephone very intently. Don Pedro glanced over at him too, his ear to the receiver. Their eyes gazed across at each other like those of two duelists who only a few days before had been good friends. The expression of watchful hostility mounted to terror in the anticipation of what was to come—to a terror which was held in check only by the consciousness of fate. What could either of them do to change their dangerous relationship to each other! Fate, too, sends its seconds and they know no solution other than: through with it!

The voice of the lieutenant sounded hoarse—he had spoken only a few words into the mouthpiece—and now he said, "At your orders!" With that he raised his head, "Of course—I understand!" After these words he looked at his watch. "Naturally!" he said, very convinced, and he repeated again, "At your orders!" with indifference equaled by an iron obedience.

Teniente Don Pedro placed the receiver slowly back on the hook. Then he suddenly stared at the instrument; at the last words he had been looking into space.

"Come!" Paco said. He did not know why, but he had to smile; he felt something like a tremor run through him, an anxious tremor rising up out of the depths of life. Then he added, "You have no time to lose." The lieutenant knelt down in silence; he raised his head, but looked only very briefly at Paco.

"Did you understand the situation, Padré?" That sounded like a sort of desperate encouragement.

"That doesn't concern us here." Paco spoke with difficulty; he tried to take one deep and quiet breath, but it came only in a violent,

disjointed, and eruptive fashion and he said abruptly in a suddenly loud voice, "The main thing is that you, Teniente, have grasped the situation! You are at confession; you stand before the court; you—I, too, of course, all of us—but you in a special manner, before a court in which you yourself are both defendant and plaintiff—yes, and judge as well—for your conscience decides—and passes judgment on what you have done—and on what you are, at this moment—about to do! Let's not talk about it; as far as that goes, the subject matter of sin is uninteresting anyway!—even a man who had been murdered, if he could speak, would have to concede that to the murderer. Padré Damiano, for example." Paco grasped at this name as though at a support with which to regain his balance. Scarcely had he recalled it, when his voice became calmer and firmer again. "What Padré Damiano would ask, and what he has probably asked himself now, is whether you are a murderer at all in this instance. That is the question here, and it is very hard to give you an answer—for me, your confessor, altogether impossible! You are about to carry out an order—don't look away!—and your freedom of action in carrying it out runs along designated tracks! For a moral rebellion, it seems to me that that already requires a heroic disposition—or—an extraordinary grace from above, I believe even both—and I don't know to what extent a man can be obliged to live up to this highest form of heroism—for—we are sinners!"

Pedro lowered his head and held his contracted fist to his forehead. "Your goodness, Padré, your goodness—oh, I could kill myself!"

Paco, looking straight ahead, smiled to himself. "Oh yes, my goodness! One might say that it resembles a carving knife because, my dear man, I am only trying to carve your piece for you—I am trying to be just, ah just! All these words! We had better stop—or let's continue; we must come to an end; the ending is always right, however it comes about—did you know that? But don't kill yourself on that account. You won't do it either; others will take care of that for you, won't they? You understand me. No, you don't understand me; you can't understand that, for death is always surprising—always—even when one is, so to speak, looking it in the eye! Look at me, friend! Give up your thoughts of hell and similar servile notions. Think of HIM whom you may perhaps soon encounter, of the holy, resplendent, the joyful One. And then act; do what you must do. Perhaps, too, a miracle may yet take place and you won't have to do it! And if you still should have to—"

Pedro raised his head, "Padré, I am nothing but an instrument, an automaton!"

Paco turned at this last word and stared at the kneeling man. "What, what are you saying! Like an automaton! How did you come by that word? Don't you suffer in carrying out such an order? Do you like to do it?"

"But, Padré, Padré Consalves!" The young officer grabbed the knees of his confessor impetuously and shook them. "What are you asking me? I am not so cruel. Not so cruel as that!"

And as though he wanted to move the man who sat before him in frozen silence to say a word, he brushed his left hand across his legs in an arousing, almost a caressing motion; he let out a soft cry and there was a start from the man in the chair. Both stared for a moment at the left hand which had just now moved so energetically over the motionless leg; the hand was bleeding where the little finger was joined to the muscle. The blood came in a single drop, like an individual living thing summoned forth out of its dwelling place! The drop swelled and finally fell onto Paco's trousers; only then—they were both like children fascinated by a novel, tiny, natural phenomenon—only then did they see that the point of a knife was gleaming through the thin trousers. Paco sank back into the chair; the lieutenant got up slowly and stepped back a step. Neither said a word. Their very breathing was softer, as though even this most intimate expression of life had become too difficult and also too dangerous.

"God is merciful!" Paco murmured that to himself with an ironic smile; now he stood up too, slowly drew the knife from his pocket and placed it in front of him on the table. As he did this, the young officer slowly moved his head; he followed the movement of Paco's hand with spellbound attention; he was astounded and at this moment no other feeling arose in him.

"I had resolved that you should die. I wanted to absolve you and then strike you down immediately in order to free the prisoners. I intended it—like an automaton! Just as obedient as you! But then an angel came between us, and now I don't have to do it!"

Teniente Don Pedro did not answer. He knelt down again, but this time like someone who did not know what else to do. His movement had something pious in its absoluteness. As the large, thin-lipped mouth of the priest softly spoke, "—deinde: ego te absolvo," a shudder ran through the bulky figure of the kneeling man; he drew back his head but did it now as though he could not do justice to the moment, could not believe in it—for he had never been happy, the Teniente Don Pedro.

The priest had already stood up and, laying the stole over the back of the chair, he whispered, "Come; it's about time!" As Pedro raised

his spongy face, Paco lowered his; he narrowed his eyes a little as though he were nearsighted; the face which slowly raised its eyes to him was radiant.

Teniente Don Pedro jumped to his feet; he staggered and thus came up to Paco, bent over, seized his hand, and tried to kiss it. Paco snatched it away from him.

"Hey!" he gasped. "No foolishness!" Then they looked at each other, stepped up to each other, and kissed.

"In the refectory, then," Paco said; he held his head slightly to one side; it was intended as a question. "I should really like to absolve my comrades as you have suggested!"

Pedro tried several times to say something, but he could only shake his head. At last he shot out vehemently, "You know, Padré Consalves, you know that, to a person such as you—I—"

"Thanks. I know what you want to say! One particularly likes to hear such things when one doesn't deserve to. You wanted to praise me, didn't you? A little late, isn't it? But I could praise you too. How many officers in your place could be persuaded—there are always ways out and afterwards, excuses, but you stick to your orders! Or don't you believe that I mean this praise seriously?"

"How terrible!" Pedro said under his breath, and repeated, "How terrible that you can manage to praise me!" Then he whispered, "I would gladly offer you—you personally—but you know—I'm ashamed of myself, or—shall I save you after all?"

Paco smiled. "You save me? No man can save another! We can spare each other—certainly; but what good does even that do? Whoever isn't shot today gets his turn tomorrow! And whom the bullet spares, he is caught by the bus—or the mountain—or a sickness—or age! That's not so bad!" Paco shook his head energetically, "That isn't. But that by one man, another—that is! Then one had better make off with all possible speed."

They went along the corridor in silence. Paco entered the darkness of his cell, sat down on the bunk, rested his head back on his shoulders, and stared at the ceiling which he could no longer see. Utopia—the beautifully shaped watermark; he would really like to have seen it once more. He suddenly felt like a small boy who wants to see his train once more in the middle of the night just before he dies, but no one brings it to him. "Dear Padré Julio!" Paco whispered as though the monk, murdered here in the room, were listening to him. "Julio, now it is my turn; I'd prefer it to be in here! But after all, Padré Damiano also opened the cell door and went a few steps to meet his end. I go to the refectory; that's where it will take place;

there we'll all be together! Oh no; no, I won't box anyone's ears! There's no point to it; that's my feeling—with no offense to Padré Damiano. I can't do it; everyone does it differently, and I always do it the wrong way!"

He heard the prisoners shuffling on the floor; like the monks when they went to midnight choir! *Deus in adjutorium meum intende!* If I'd managed it properly, you would now be on your way to freedom. The fault is mine; I know it; but I'm coming along!

He heard Don Pedro's voice; oh, how shamelessly he was lying now, all on orders! What about a little something to eat in the refectory? In the refectory? Before the journey! A little something to eat; that's not bad. Paco suddenly had to laugh. He was the last to go into the refectory. The rectangular room had tables arranged along the walls on three sides; it was exactly as it used to be. On the narrow, empty wall at one end was the food counter, which was equipped with a wooden sliding door. Its rolling had always had something friendly and promising about it when at the end of the reading from Scripture, promptly after the knocking signal, the lay brothers set the shutter moving and let in the smells from the kitchen. Now, however, the wooden square was still closed.

Lieutenant Pedro stood across from the prisoners, who stared at the floor, looked at each other indifferently, or defiantly surveyed the young officer. Lieutenant Pedro explained briefly; transport to the large POW camp was not without danger—and since there was a priest among the prisoners, to whom he himself had just made his confession, as a matter of fact, that priest was to give them general absolution before they all had something to eat. After these words, with short, quiet steps, he left the hall.

Paco's face was red with shame. He was ashamed because of Pedro's lies and also because he suddenly was to step out of his obscurity as a soldier; moreover, he was ashamed before Pedro because Pedro knew that he was about to die. That was an odd shame that he had never known before; like being partly undressed before the eye of some unauthorized visitor, but he felt himself much more sensitive, much more helpless in his designation for death before this one who knew and who had just left the uncanny arena to give the orders for death without himself dying along with the others.

So he stepped out in front of the prisoners, clumsy, heavy-footed, and almost tottering. But now he was ashamed with regard to them too, these men who suspected nothing while he read the mark of death on their foreheads, on brows frowning over trivial thoughts or flat and indifferent, concerned only with the moment. And he was

not permitted to say: you are lost! He said only, yes, he was a priest and wanted to give them absolution. He explained general absolution in a few words; then on a sudden inspiration he mounted the lectern on which he had so often sat and read aloud. At first he thought it was the raised platform which had attracted him, but then he realized he was drawn by the nearness of the food counter. Yes, and now he knew, too, whence the "little refreshment" was to come; now he knew where the missing machine gun was. And in a flash, he now realized as well how Don Pedro happened to be able to lie in such an ingenious manner. This "little refreshment" was already planned before the general absolution was decided on. So Don Pedro's lies were not so impertinent as he had at first believed. Paco stood there with his back toward the shutter. He found it difficult to look at the prisoners; since Pedro had gone out and he was alone with these men, the dull feeling of guilt had seized upon him even more inescapably. He seemed to himself like a clumsy comedian who changes and misrepresents his part in the course of the play. What use had he made of the knife and the many opportunities to escape? If any of these fellows had had even a fraction of the chances he had had, they would probably all be free now. Instead of that, he had kissed the executioner—and exchanged polite words with him; was, so to speak, in agreement with him. What did it matter to the others that he himself was ready to die? They didn't want to die; one could tell that by looking at them.

Some of the prisoners were already kneeling; others remained standing, but not out of protest; they were merely too embarrassed to kneel down. A few nudged each other with their elbows and whispered something. A broad-shouldered fellow was smirking broadly and indulgently; he raised first his right leg and then his left, and set his feet wide apart. Perhaps he was a sailor!

Paco's voice came with difficulty, but he spoke simply and surely. He even smiled as he said that they were in a war and you could never know from which side it might get you. Anyone, therefore, who had anything weighing on his mind—not only sins, but worries and anxieties—should think of God and of wife and children at home and of father and mother. And with the same longing as they had for their loved ones, they should think of their Father in heaven. And no one should blame God for all these things but mankind, and himself as well.

"All our violence has come together and now it runs its course." He said that, and added almost hurriedly, "But also our indecision,

our weakness and fear of the unaccustomed, even our fear of shedding blood; there is guilt in all this—yes, for if one of us had used the knife at the right time—but fellow soldiers, let us surrender ourselves to God's judgment. God judges, and God is merciful!" Then he said the prayers—he still knew them word for word: "Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem"—pardon, absolution and remission of your sins—what a store of mercy in such cold, legal words, he thought—and as he made the Sign of the Cross and sent his "Amen" firmly into the room, he heard that familiar sound of the sliding door behind him, still just as promising as ever. A sudden clatter filled the walls, as though an invisible iron chariot armed with scythes were being driven through the room. Paco heard a cry and saw the broad-shouldered man in front of him throw his arms into the air; to his right some men were falling, while he himself felt a blow between the shoulders and sank backwards gently as though he were received by an infinite, soft abyss into which he could sink forever without ever having to fall against the hard ground.

—*Translated by Elita Walker Caspari*

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